HUMANISM AND SCHOLASTICISM IN GERMANY
1450-1520

James H.arris Overfield

A DISSERTATION
PRESENTED TO THE
FACULTY OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

RECOMMENDED FOR ACCEPTANCE BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF

HISTORY

JULY, 1968

TABLE OF CONTENTS

page
PREFACE. ii

chapter
I. THE SCHOLASTIC TRADITION IN GERMANY. 1
II. HUMANIST BEGINNINGS, 1450-1480 45
III. FROM GRAMMAR REFORM TO PLATONIC REVIVAL. 106
IV. HUMANISM AND THE UNIVERSITIES, 1480-1500 147
V. HUMANISM AND THEOLOGY IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY. 175
VI. LITERARY FEUDS AND PAMPHLET WARS, 1500-1510. . . .220
VII. HUMANISM AND THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY. 265
VIII. THE REUCHLIN AFFAIR. 312
IX. THE END OF MEDIEVAL SCHOLASTICISM IN GERMANY . . .364

BIBLIOGRAPHY 401

ABSTRACT 420

PREFACE

Most historians have regarded the conflict between humanism and scholasticism as one of the major themes in the intellectual history of the Renaissance. Recent work on Italian humanism by Paul Oscar Kristeller, however, has made it difficult to accept this conflict as an historical truism.[1] According to Kristeller, the "humanist-scholastic clash" was something less than the bitter struggle most historians have made of it. He conceded that some humanists criticized the logicians of their day and censured the crude Latin style of the theologians. He also acknowledged that humanists competed with scholastics for certain teaching positions in the universities. But Kristeller denied that these attacks and frictions represented a vigorous young "philosophy" rebelling against and eventually pushing aside the "outmoded obscurities" of the schoolmen. In fact, he argued that the humanists, with their concern for grammar, rhetoric and poetry, rarely worried about the scholastics, who were mainly interested in logic, theology and natural philosophy. Such controversies that did occur never involved a clash of opposing principles, but rather were little more than "personal feuds, intellectual tournaments or rhetorical exercises." In general, the Renaissance in Italy was a long period of "peaceful coexistance" between humanism and scholasticism.

---

[1] Paul O. Kristeller, "Humanism and Scholasticism," Renaissance Thought (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), 92-119.

Although Kristeller's theories refer specifically to Italy, they have obvious relevance for the history of humanism in the northern countries. Do his ideas apply to European humanism as a whole, or was the Italian situation unique? It is true, for example, that the Italian humanists had little trouble finding a place for themselves in the Italian universities; this is not surprising, since the study of rhetoric and related disciplines had never disappeared in medieval Italy. But would the humanists find such a ready reception in the northern universities? Here dialectic and philosophy dominated the curriculum, and for centuries rhetoric and grammar had been treated in the most cursory manner, if at all. It is also true that in Italy there were few conflicts between humanists and scholastic theologians; this too comes as no surprise, since the more secular-minded Italian humanists had little interest in theological problems and theological reform. But could this also hold true for the northern humanists? They functioned in a more religiously-charged culture and often involved themselves in movements for church reform. In other words was "peaceful coexistance" between scholastic and humanist possible in northern Europe—a Europe which differed from Italy not only intellectually and spiritually, but in almost every aspect of culture?

After more than a century of German historical scholarship, after countless monographs and numerous interpretive studies, this question of the relationship of humanism and scholasticism in Germany has never been adequately treated. In fact a survey of the literature leaves the reader little more than a jumble of confused and contradictory theses.

Most German writers of the late nineteenth century made a great deal of the clash between the humanists and the scholastics. Influenced both by European liberalism and the Burckhardtian concept of the modernity of the Renaissance, these writers depicted the humanists as heralds of the modern world, engaged in a life and death struggle to free the human spirit from medieval bondage and barbarism. The classic work in this genre was David Friedrich Strauss's biography of Ulrich von Hutten.[2] In Strauss's hands, Hutten became the great liberator of Germany—a fighter "for light against darkness, for culture against barbarism, for freedom against despotism, for the fatherland against the foreign oppressors."[3] Reuchlin became the heroic figure "who led the human spirit from the cloudiness of the sinking Middle Ages to the freer air of the Renaissance."[4] Similar in tone was F.W. Kampschulte's

---

[2] Ulrich von Hutten (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1871).

[3] Ibid., vi.

[4] Ibid., 239.

Die Universität Erfurt in ihrem Verhältnisse zu dem Humanismus und Reformation,[5] a book dubbed by one later critic as "a novel with footnotes."[6] As with Strauss, Kampschulte's theme was the constant struggle between the progressive humanists and the backward scholastics, and the ultimate triumph of the humanists during the Reuchlin affair.

Of course some writers avoided the excesses of Strauss and Kampschulte. Friedrich Paulsen, for example, in his *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts auf den deutsche Schulen und Universitäten*,[7] rejected the assertion that all the scholastics had been dull-witted bigots. But men like Paulsen were exceptions, and in general the tone of most of the work was very similar: the relations between humanist and scholastic were described in terms of a struggle or battle; the treatment of this "struggle" was normally favorable to the humanists; and the final chapter of the tale was always the triumph of the humanists and the scattering of the barbarian sophists.[8] Occasionally a writer like Dietrich Reichling tried to defend the scholastics and attack the "poisonous hate and infernal evil" of the humanists, but he too could see humanist-scholastic relations only in terms of controversy and conflict.[9]

---

[5] (Trier: Lintz, 1858).

[6] Friedrich Benary, *Zur Geschichte der Stadt und der Universität Erfurt* (Gotha: Perthes, 1919), 13.

[7] (Leipzig: Veit, 1885).

[8] See for example, Heinrich Kämmel, "Die Universität Köln in ihrem Kampfe gegen den aufstrebenden Humanismus," *Jahrbücher für Philologie und Padagogik*, II (1875), 401-417; Carl Krause, *Helius Eobanus Hessus* (Gotha: Perthes, 1879).

As historians grew in sophistication and as researchers probed more deeply into the histories of universities and of the Middle Ages, such naive conceptions became unacceptable. The reaction began in the 1890's. During this period the leading writer on the subject of humanism and scholasticism was an east German historian, Gustav Bauch. His career typified the virtues and shortcomings of German historiography. In addition to much else, he published studies on the reception of humanism at many German universities, including Erfurt, Wittenberg, Ingolstadt, Leipzig, Cracow, Frankfurt-am-Oder and Vienna. His work contained much valuable information, but too often it degenerated into a series of biographical sketches of any humanist or half-humanist who set foot in a given university even for the shortest time.[10] Furthermore his books rarely covered the whole humanist period; he was interested only in the period of _Frühhumanismus_, which meant that his studies usually ended around 1505. But worst of all his love of detail was so great that he neglected the larger issues involved in his work. Even when his findings conflicted with earlier interpretations, much of the old rhetoric and terminology crept into his work. But when he did occasionally attempt to draw some broader conclusions, his conception was indeed different from that of the previous period.[11] Bauch found, to be sure, many examples of friction between the humanists and the scholastics, but it was not always the titanic struggle depicted by Strauss or Kampschulte; nor was the end of the story a clear-cut humanist victory. His conception was rather one of gradual compromise and conciliation. On the one hand the scholastics gradually overcame their opposition ot classical studies and conceded to rhetoric and poetry a place in the university curriculum; on the other hand the humanists gradually gave up their "Italian superficialities" and dedicated themselves to reforming scholasticism rather than rooting it out entirely.

---

[9] _Ortwin Gratius, sein Leben und Wirken_ (Heiligenstadt: Dilion, 1884).

[10] At its worst in _Die Universität Erfurt im Zeitalter des Frühhumanismus_ (Breslau: H. Marcus, 1904).

Other historians set forth theories even more contradictory to the earlier point of view. They argued that humanism was not an opponent to scholasticism, but rather that humanism was actually a product of scholasticism. Several historians supported this idea or variations of it, but Heinrich

---

[11] See the opening pages of "Wittenberg und die Scholastik," Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde, XVIII (1897), 285-339.

Hermelink has usually been singled out as the main representative of this school.[12] Hermelink maintained that German humanism was a product of two movements, both of which were intimately linked to Church reform. In his opinion, German humanism resulted when the deep piety of the German people took a scholarly bent as it merged with the mid-fifteenth century Thomist revival in the universities. The proponents of the *via antiqua*, argued Hermelink,shared many of the characteristics of the later humanists: they called for a simplification of theology, they opposed the complicated logic of the nominalists, they demanded teaching reforms and they wrote in an improved Latin style. Hermelink argued further that these were not fortuitous similarities; rather these Thomist teachers and theologians were the true fathers of German humanism.

Hermelink's argument was somewhat less than well-documented, and in the twenty years after its appearance it attracted a swarm of unsympathetic critics. Friedrich Benary,[13] Paul Mestwerdt[14] and Hans Baron[15] all pecked away at Hermelink's ideas, but Gerhard Ritter wrote the most thorough refutation.[16] Ritter pointed out that at the strictly Thomist University of Cologne, opposition to the humanists was stronger than anywhere else. Ritter conceded that both the humanists and the Thomists looked to the past for models to improve the educational and religious conditions of their day, but he added the obvious point that the two groups were trying to revive essentially different things. The Thomists were attempting to revive an earlier form of medieval thought, while the humanists were seeking to revive the ideals of antiquity. Finally Ritter convincingly showed that the linguistic and logical "reforms" of the Thomists were for the most part imaginary.

---

[12] *Die religiösen Reformbestrebungen des deutschen Humanismus*, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1897); also by Hermelink, *Die theologische Fakultät in Tübingen vor der Reformation, 1477-1534* (Tübingen: Siebeck, 1906); and "Die Anfänge des Humanismus in Tübingen," *Württembergische Vierteljahrshefte für Landesgeschichte*, N.F., XV (1906), 319-337.

[13] Benary, *op. cit.*, 19.

[14] *Die Anfänge des Erasmus* (Leipzig: Haupt, 1917).

In other works Ritter expanded his ideas on the relation of humanism and scholasticism. In his famous article "Die geschichtliche Bedeutung des deutschen Humanismus,"[17] he carried Bauch's rather timid revisionism several steps further. He attacked earlier historians for depicting the intellectual history of the Renaissance as a battle between the "enlightened" humanists and the "obscure" scholastics. Such a

---

[15] "Zur Frage des Ursprungs des deutschen Humanismus," Historische Zeitschrift, 132 (1925), 413-446.

[16] "Via antiqua und via moderna auf den deutschen Universitäten," Studien zur Spätscholastik, II (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1922).

[17] Historische Zeitschrift, 127 (1923), 393-453.

clash, he maintained, occurred only in Italy. South of the Alps humanism existed outside the universities and was generally opposed to the teaching tradition represented there. In Germany, on the other hand, humanism was centered in the universities and was accepted there in a short time, within one or two generations. Ritter argued that the examples of mutual hostility between the humanists and scholastics were few in number and that their bitterness had been exaggerated. Even when opposition did occur, it was not the result of a clash of principles and philosophy; instead it was the result of personal pique, competition for jobs or rivalry for promotions in the German universities, which were continually short of funds. But once the humanists achieved positions in the schools, there was little friction with the scholastics. What resulted was a kind of "scholastic-academic humanism," the exact nature of which Ritter never explained.

Ritter had hoped that his work would stimulate further research, but before anyone could substantiate or refute his ideas, war and Nazism dealt German historiography the blow from which it has never really recovered. In fact until the recent work by Lewis Spitz, nothing particularly new or exciting has been done on the subject of German humanism. And the little that has been written has been confusing and contradictory on the humanism-scholasticism problem. All writers have found examples of conflict, but few agree on how widespread the conflicts were, what caused them and what they meant. A few writers have followed Ritter in arguing that the conflicts resulted from nothing more than academic competition. Others have argued, however, that the conflicts resulted from a clash of ideology and basic religious outlooks. Willy Andreas, for example, in his *Deutschland vor der Reformation*,[18] argued that the abstract theological hairsplitting of the scholastics symbolized for the humanists all that was wrong with the late medieval church. Some have felt that the conflicts were insignificant; others such as Joseph Lortz have said that the conflicts were an important cause of the Reformation.[19] Still others have stated that humanist attitudes changed over time. Hajo Holborn's *Ulrich von Hutten and the German Reformation* agreed with Ritter that there was little friction between early humanism and scholasticism. But this changed after Erasmus, when the humanists turned "from fiction to dogma" and began to use their philological methods "to change the meaning of the scripture." Finally, wrote Holborn, in Hutten's case the "heresy hunting of the ecclesiastical court during the Reuchlin affair revealed once and for all the incompatability of the intellectual worlds of humanism and scholasticism."[20]

---

[18] (Stuttgart, Deutsch verlags-anstalt, 1948).

[19] *Die Reformation in Deutschland* (Freiburg: Herder, 1948).

[20] (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 54, 56.

As a result of this confusion, even the most recent works on the subject are unclear as to the relationship of German humanism and scholasticism. For example Heiko Oberman, in his monograph on the German nominalist, Gabriel Biel, has noted that Biel was in contact with a relatively large circle of humanists and that Heinrich Bebel, the teacher of rhetoric at Tübingen added dedicatory poems to several of Biel's works. Oberman concluded that "nominalism and humanism were apparently more compatible than we have long been inclined to believe."[21] On the other hand, Myron P. Gilmore has recently written, "in no major country of Europe did there develop so sharp a separation as in Germany between the followers of the new learning and those who upheld the scholastic tradition."[22] Lewis Spitz, in his admirable *Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists*, feels that oppposition to scholasticism was a common characteristic of all the German humanists. As he stated in the conclusion, "they criticized scholasticism as harmful to culture, injurious to Latin style, hostile to poetry and the *bonae literae*, neglectful of natural and moral philosophy, as being precious rather than practical, logical rather than grammatical and rhetorical."[23] But Spitz restricted his study to only eight men, and his biographical approach prevented him from discussing changes in humanist thought with time.

---

[21] *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 19.

[22] *The World of Humanism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1952), 219.

The previous review of the literature points out some of the obvious difficulties and pitfalls in studying the relation of humanism and scholasticism in Germany. Many historians have placed too much credence in the writings of the humanists themselves. They have forgotten that the humanists were orators and rhetoricians, with an orator's penchant for over-statement, exaggeration and self-dramatization. Other historians have fallen into the fallacy of identifying scholasticism with scholastic theology. Theology was indeed the queen of the sciences in the Middle Ages, and the term scholastic certainly brings to mind men like Aquinas and Scotus, who were primarily theologians. But in the day-to-day life of the universities, the arts faculty and not the theological faculty was the largest, most active and most influential. Finally, other historians have erred by letting one or two of the better known humanists speak for the movement as a whole. Erasmus was the greatest northern humanist, Hutten was the most colorful, and to be sure their influence was vast. But obviously anyone who reads nothing but the Praise of Folly and the Letters of the Obscure Men will receive a somewhat distorted picture of what the humanists thought of the scholastics.

---

[23] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 275.

It is apparent that the only way to solve the problem of humanism and scholasticism is to combine an analysis of humanist ideas with a study of the reception of humanism at the various German universities. But this much said, methodological problems immediately present themselves. Besides the obvious organizational difficulties of trying to combine the two approaches, the historian of the German universities is confronted by the fact that by 1520 there were no fewer than twelve universities within the boundaries of the German-speaking Empire. To treat them all thoroughly would be impossible, but to concentrate on too small a number would risk distortion. For example, Ritter's revisionist ideas may have been in part a result of his special interest in the University of Heidelberg, where humanism meant the pious and insipid variety of Wimpheling and his following. Lack of documents precludes a fruitful study of several universities. For example the early records of the University of Mainz have been almost completely lost, some in the Thirty Years War, some in World War II. Similarly the early records for the Baltic universities of Rostock and Greifswald are also very sparse, as they are for Frankfurt-am-Oder. Finally there is little material on the University of Erfurt, an unfortunate situation, since the university not only was one of the oldest and largest in Germany, but also a center of humanist activity. For the remaining institutions we are better informed, though often key documents are missing. For example, the records for Cologne become increasingly meagre in the years before the Reformation, and for Heidelberg, the important reform statutes of 1522 have been lost.

The thesis will examine closely the attitudes of those humanists normally treated in the standard works on the subject—Agricola, Celtis, Bebel, Wimpheling, von Hutten and Mutian. It will also deal with a number of less prominent figures such as Jacob Locher and Joannes Aesticampianus, who figured prominently in the humanist-scholastic debates. There are several reasons for not including Erasmus in the above list. First, the question of Erasmus's relations to scholasticism is a difficult and complex topic, one that demands special treatment.[24] Second it is probably stretching a point to speak of Erasmus as a "German humanist." He never thought a great deal of the Germans, never stayed in Germany very long, never had any ties with a German university and had relatively few German friends. For these reasons the present thesis will treat Erasmus only insofar as he influenced or excited controversy among the Germans.

---

[24] Christian Dolfen, *Die Stellung des Erasmus zur scholastische Method* (Osnabruck: 1937).

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Jerrold E. Seigel, professor of history at Princeton University, under whose direction this project was conceived and completed. I would also like to thank Professors Joseph Strayer and Gaines Post, also of Princeton, who helped on a number of problems while Mr. Seigel was on leave during the academic year 1966-1967. I owe a special word of thanks to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Overfield, my wife's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Libby, and to the Department of History at Princeton, whose support helped finance four years of graduate school and a research trip to Munich, Germany. My greatest debt is to my wife, Susan. She has read and typed the numerous drafts for this dissertation and has put up with both the German humanists and their barbarian adversaries with constant good humor and enduring patience.

CHAPTER I

THE SCHOLASTIC TRADITION IN GERMANY

Medieval Germany lagged far behind the rest of Europe in the foundation of universities. By the end of the fourteenth century, the other nations of western Europe boasted not just of one or two, but usually of several universities. France had the University of Paris in addition to a group of flourishing provincial schools; Italy had the great law school at Bologna and a handful of smaller institutions; England had Oxford and Cambridge; even Spain and Portugal had between them more than half a dozen universities. But until the foundation of the University of Prague in 1347, there was no university within the Holy Roman Empire; and until the foundation of the University of Vienna in 1365 there was no institution which could rightly be called a "German university."[1]

This lack of universities did not mean a complete stagnation of German intellectual activity. By 1300 a number of cathedral and city schools existed where the rudiments of

---

[1] The University of Prague originally attracted large numbers of Germans, but after the Hussite disturbances of the early fifteenth century, it became a university primarily for Czechs.

Latin and logic could be learned. In fact the schools at Trier and Erfurt were sizeable institutions which sometimes had enrollments in the thousands.[2] None of these schools granted degrees, however, and the lack of capable teachers with university training hindered their growth and kept the instruction inferior to that available in the west. The Dominicans and Fransiscans had schools in Cologne, Regensburg, Magdeburg and Leipzig which taught theology and Aristotelian philosophy. But again like the city and cathedral schools, these institutions granted no regular university degrees and moreover were mainly designed for members of the orders. As a result, Germans had to travel to Italy or France if they wanted advanced academic training. Throughout the Middle Ages sizeable numbers of Germans studied law at Bologna and Orleans or philosophy and theology at Paris.[3] Of course high costs generally limited this foreign study to the nobility and the well-beneficed clergy. These reasons accounted in part for Germany's failure to produce many notable scholars during the medieval centuries. Some of the exceptions—Albertus Magnus, Meister Eckhart and Albert of Saxony—immediately come to mind.

---

[2] Georg Kaufmann, *Geschichte der deutschen Universitäten*, (Stuttgart: Gotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1888), 159.

[3] Wilhelm Lucke, "Deutsche Studenten im Bologna," *Das Gymnasium*, LII (1942), 43-61. Gustav Knod, "Universitäten, Humanisten," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, XVI (1906), 700-704.

But in general the lack of universities meant that France, England and Italy far outshadowed the educational and intellectual achievements of medieval Germany.

There have been many explanations for the late start of the university movement in Germany and then its rapid progress in the fifteenth century. Some of the older German historians felt there were elements in the medieval German *Geist* which retarded the foundation of universities; Heinrich Denifle, for one, wrote that it was the *Wanderlust* of German people which drove them to Bologna and Paris and discouraged them from starting universities of their own.[4] Some recent East German historians have emphasized social and economic factors but have offered little hard evidence to support their theories.[5] Of all the explanations offered, the most plausible have stressed the importance of medieval Germany's political situation.

The earliest European universities—Salerno, Oxford, Paris and Bologna—were by no means political creations; they grew spontaneously out of existing schools and owed little to secular or religious rulers. It is not surprising that nothing similar happened in Germany. In the late twelfth century, Germany had no prestigious center of learning from which a university could grow and was simply too far behind the rest of Europe in political and cultural development. But during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the university movement in Europe underwent an important change. In the early thirteenth century we find the first attempts to artificially create the kind of institution which had developed spontaneously at Oxford and Paris. In 1224, Emperor Frederick II hoped to strengthen his hand in Italy by setting up a rival to the great University of Bologna, which was situated in enemy Guelph territory; he simply issued a charter which by the stroke of a pen began the University of Naples. Then nine years later in 1233, Pope Gregory IX founded the University of Toulouse; in his case he hoped that a new university in Languedoc, the center of the Albigensian heresy, would upgrade the clergy and help protect the Church from heresy. Both these events suggested that the Pope or Emperor could "found" other universities at the request of a prince or city, just as they had founded Naples and Toulouse for their own special purposes.[6]

---

[4] Heinrich Denifle, *Die Enstehung der Universitäten des Mittelalters bis 1400* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1885), 175.

[5] Leo Stern, "Die geschichtliche Gesamtlage Deutschlands zur Zeit der Gründung der Universität Wittenberg," *450 Jahre Martin Luther Universität Halle-Wittenberg* (Leipzig: Leipziger Grossbuchbinderei, 1956), 1-69.

---

[6] Hastings Rashdall, The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, Vol. II, part I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895) contains the basic facts on the founding of the European universities. The revised edition of Powicke and Emden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936) has added much bibliographical material.

Partly because of the precedents set by Frederick and Gregory, the number of European universities more than tripled by the mid-fourteenth century. In France secular rulers founded three new universities: the University of Avignon (1303) by Charles II, Count of Provence; the University of Cahors (1332) by the city council; and the University of Grenoble (1339) by Humbert II, Count of Viennois. In Italy the cities took the initiative in founding the new studia. Between the founding of the University of Siena in 1246 and the founding of the University of Pavia in 1361, eight new universities received charters. In this same period the sovereigns of the various Spanish kingdoms founded the Universities of Valladolid, Lériola, Perpignan and Heusca. But in Germany there was not a single prince, city council or bishop who showed the initiative necessary to found a university within his realm.

One simple reason for this situation was that the German princes had no pressing need for universities. In Italy, where bureaucracies and formal diplomacy developed early, the cities demanded a steady stream of men with university training in law, oratory and the notarial arts to carry on the business of government. But in the Empire, the number of men who returned every year from France or Italy with a university education was sufficient to fulfill the demands of the rulers. The chaotic condition of German politics up until 1350 also helps explain why the university movement was retarded. Before a ruler could think about educating his subjects, certain basic conditions of stability and security were necessary. But in Germany, the emperors' military ventures into Italy, disputed imperial elections, papal and foreign intrigues and constant local warfare sapped the governing classes of the money, time and desire needed for the founding of universities,

This unfavorable political situation began to change in the mid-fourteenth century. In 1356 the Golden Bull gave the Empire a semblance of a constitution and removed much of the uncertainty characteristic of medieval German politics. It settled the method for electing the emperor and established the principles of primogeniture and indivisibility in all the electoral principalities. The Golden Bull marked the beginning of a political renaissance in the Empire which strengthened the territorial principalities and resulted in their ultimate consolidation into sovereign states. In this process of state building, the founding of universities played a constructive role. The presence of a university within a principality obviously increased the prestige and stature of a ruler. More important, a university produced men with the training necessary for participation in the growing government administrations.

The political motives of Emperor Charles IV of Bohemia in founding the University of Prague are readily apparent.

Charles was the first emperor who saw himself mainly as a territorial prince and who avoided using the imperial crown as a lever to extend his power in other parts of Germany or Italy. By recognizing the rights of the princes in the Golden Bull and by coming to agreements with the Hapsburgs and Wittelsbachs, he was able to devote his energies to strengthening his hereditary holdings in Bohemia. He was a learned man who had spent several years in Paris, and he recognized that a university in Bohemia would add to the strength and prestige of his kingdom. Thus in 1347 he gained permission from the Pope to found a studium generale in Prague with all the rights and privileges of the other European universities. The success of the new institution was immediate, as east European students previously deterred by the cost and difficulty of traveling to Paris and Bologna streamed to Prague.

The motives in the formation of the second university within the Empire, the University of Vienna, were no less political. Its founder, Duke Rudolph IV of Austria, as the head of the Hapsburgs, was the Bohemian monarch's principal rival, and he naturally envied the prestige and advantages enjoyed by Charles as a result of the new University of Prague. Thus in 1365 he applied for and received the charter which established the University of Vienna.

With Prague and Vienna the university movement in the Empire was underway. In 1379 a third university was added, when the city council of Erfurt received papal permission to establish a university on the basis of the old school which had existed in Erfurt throughout the Middle Ages. Unlike Prague, however, both Erfurt and Vienna were extremely weak in their early years and had trouble attracting students and faculty. In fact, only events outside the Empire prevented an early demise for them.

The 1380's and 90's saw both the revival of Vienna and Erfurt and the formation of two new German universities. The event which caused this rapid change was the partial break-up of the University of Paris under pressures resulting from the Schism within the Church. As stated previously, a sizeable number of Germans had studied and taught at Paris throughout the later Middle Ages. But after the Schism in 1378, these Germans found themselves in the uncomfortable position of supporting the Italian Pope, Urban VI, while attending a French university. A number of petty harassments culminated in 1381 when the French Pope, Clement VII, gave the chancellor of the University the right to deny promotion to any Urbanist. The Germans protested, but on an appeal from the French masters, the Paris Parlement decreed in 1381 that any resistance to Clement's decree would lead to persecution. The Germans found the situation intolerable and quickly headed for home.

It was this group of German masters and students which formed the nucleus of the new German universities of the 1380's and 90's. Some of them went to the established universities at Vienna and Erfurt. In Vienna Duke Rudolph attracted to his struggling institution the well-known theologian, Henry of Langenstein, a bitter opponent of Clement VII while a teacher at Paris. Langenstein's prestige drew new teachers and students, and in 1384 Duke Rudolph issued a new charter of privilege to begin the real life of the University. Exiles from Paris also put new life into the University of Erfurt. Regular lectures and examinations began in the mid 80's, and in 1389 the school received a new bull of foundation from Urban VI. The overflow from Paris was large enough to furnish faculty and students for two more German universities. In 1385 Ruprecht I of the Palatine, with the help of Marsilius of Inghen, a former rector at the University of Paris, established the University of Heidelberg. And in 1388 the city of Cologne received permission from Urban VI to found still another university. Henry of Langenstein was exaggerating only a little when he wrote in 1398 to Ruprecht III of the Palatine on the benefits which German education had received from the schism:

> Studies in France were dissipated, the sun of wisdom was there eclipsed; wisdom retired so it might shine on another people. Certainly now the unfair mouth of the babblers has been closed who said there is no splendor or truth among the Germans, but only the blind raving of barbarity. 7

7". . .studia dissipantur Gallie, sol sapiencie ibi eclipsatur, recedit sapiencia, ut illustret gentem alteram. Certe jam obstructum est os loquencium iniqua: non est apud

The subsequent splintering of the University of Prague in 1409 gave further impetus to the German university movement. The University had always been the scene of conflict between Germans and Bohemians. Although it had been founded by a Bohemian king, Germans had always dominated the institution. Following the example set by earlier universities, the statutes of Prague stated that each of the four "nations" had one vote in the University council. And since Germans controlled the Bavarian, Saxon and Polish nations, they could outvote the Bohemians time and again. Conflicts between German and Bohemian masters over lecture hours and collegiate appointments had their parallel among the students in frequent brawls and street-fights. These conflicts became more serious in the early fifteenth century when theological and philosophical differences arose between the two nationalities. Most Germans adhered to the nominalist teaching which dominated Paris in the fourteenth century; but the Bohemians, under the leadership of John Huss, were becoming increasingly influenced by the extreme realism of the Englishman, John Wycliff. In 1403 and 1408 the University council, still dominated by Germans, condemned several doctrines of Wycliff as heretical and declared it unlawful to

---

Germanos veritatis splendor, sed preceps immanitatis furor, . . ." from "Epistola Henrici de Hassia informativa super scismate," ed. Gustav Sommerfeldt, "Die Stellung Ruprects III von der Pfalz zur deutschen Publizistik bis zum Jahre 1400," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins, N.F., XXII (1907), p. 311.

publicly teach them. After the second condemnation, a deputation of Bohemians headed by Huss appealed to King Wenceslaus that he alter voting rules in the University council to break the German monopoly. Accordingly, on January 18, 1409, the King ordered that the Bohemians should have three votes, the other three nations together only one. When on May 9, 1409 a German appeal was turned down, and the German rector was removed from office in favor of a Bohemian, the Germans departed. Exactly how many left is not certain. The fifteenth-century Bohemian chronicler, Procopius, estimated that over two thousand Germans left Prague on a single day;[8] while in his history of Bohemia, Aeneas Sylvius wrote that three thousand more left in the following summer.[9]

The total figure of five thousand departing Germans is no doubt an exaggeration. But it is nonetheless true that with the migration from Prague a large number of students and teachers were forced to seek their academic fortunes in Germany. In response, two new universities were founded. In 1409 a group of forty masters and four hundred students accepted the invitation of the Landgraves of Thuringia, Frederick and William, to establish a university at Leipzig. On September

---

[8] K. Höfler, ed., "Chronicon Procopii notarii Pragensis," Geschichtschreiber der Hussitischen Bewegung in Böhmen (Vienna: Hof und Staatsdruckeri, 1856), I, 70.

[9] Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, De Bohemarum, et ex his Imperatarum aliquot origine ac gestis, Historia (Frankfurt: 1687), Ch. 35.

9, 1409 Pope Alexander V issued the necessary charter, and lectures began in Leipzig in October. The founding of the University of Rostock was also a result of the migration from Prague, for until 1409 the Bohemian university had always attracted a large number of Baltic students. John III and Albert V, Dukes of Mecklenburg sought to fill the gap, and as a result of their efforts, the University of Rostock began regular classes in 1419.

After the foundation of Rostock the university movement in Germany temporarily slowed down. In the 1450's, however, the growing strength and rivalries of the German principalities were reflected in the founding of four new universities at Trier, Greifswald, Freiburg-im-Breisgau and Ingolstadt. And in the 1470's new universities were added at Mainz and Tübingen. By the end of the century electoral Saxony and electoral Brandenburg were the only sizeable principalities in Germany without a university. By 1502, however, Saxony had the University of Wittenberg, and by 1506, Brandenburg had the University of Frankfurt-am-Oder.

Thus the university movement in Germany began slowly, but once it started, the Germans carried it on with their traditional thoroughness. In the one hundred fifty years before the Reformation no less than fifteen new universities began in Germany. Of the fifteen, ten had been founded by princes, three by bishops and two by cities. Most of them by the standards of Paris or Oxford were small-time operations. Two of them, Trier and Würzburg, both founded by churchmen, shut their doors only a few years after their foundation. The largest of them, Cologne, Erfurt, and Leipzig, consistently attracted large numbers of students, usually between two hundred fifty and three hundred fifty new students per year.[10] But for the rest, poor financing, inadequate lecture halls, miniscule libraries and difficulties in maintaining teachers in the higher faculties made existence a constant struggle.[11] Nevertheless by the early sixteenth century most Germans must have been convinced that the "sun of wisdom" was indeed shining brightly over their land.

There was nothing unique about the subjects and teaching methods in the German universities. Although in minor organizational arrangements a few institutions adopted practices from the University of Bologna, in matters of curriculum they meticulously copied the practices and doctrines of the University of Paris. The first masters at the oldest German universities had all studied or taught at Paris, and they brought with them to Germany the methods they had learned there. These older institutions in turn served as the models for the universities founded in the fifteenth century, so time after time the Parisian system was repeated. The result was a marked similarity in academic practices throughout the Empire. In all four faculties—arts, law, theology and medicine—German professors gave the same series of lectures and German students read the same set of books.

---

[10] Horst Rudolph Abe, "Die frequentielle Bedeutung der Erfurt Universität im Rahmen des mittelalterlichen deutschen Hochschulewesens," Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Erfurt, II (1957), 29-57.

[11] J.M. Fletcher, "Wealth and Poverty in the Medieval German Universities," Europe in the Late Middle Ages, ed. J.R. Hale, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), 410-436.

Although theology enjoyed a theoretical priority as the "queen of medieval sciences," in fact the faculty of arts was the largest and most important of the four university faculties. Every student had to have studied in the faculty before going on to law, theology or medicine, so conceptions and methods taught there inevitably affected the teaching of the disciplines in the higher faculties. The curriculum of the faculty of arts originally adopted at Paris matured slowly in the two hundred fifty year period between 1000 and 1250. It was the product of two events which colored the whole scope of medieval thought: the revival of interest in dialectic and the recovery of the complete works of Aristotle.

Of the two events, the revival of logic occurred first. Before 1000 there had been little interest in logic in spite of its theoretical equality with the two other elements in the trivium, grammar and rhetoric. Two of Aristotle's logical treatises, De Interpretatione and the Categories, along with the commentaries of Boethius and Porphyry, were available to scholars in this period, but they evoked little response. What education was available, therefore, was primarily a literary education based on the grammarians and rhetoricians of late antiquity. As a result, most of the notable writers before 1000 devoted their energies to history, poetry and grammar, and theologians treated religious subjects in a literary way.

For reasons that are still unclear, this situation began to change drastically in the eleventh century. Logic was restored to its proper place in the curriculum and gradually developed from a perfunctory memory technique into a subject for intensive study. Syllogism, disputation, the orderly collection of arguments for debate became intoxicating pursuits which finally completely replaced the literary and classical studies cultivated in the twelfth century at Orleans and Chartres. By 1250 logic was not only attracting the best minds, but it pervaded every discipline and put its stamp on all medieval thought. The mid-thirteenth century poem of Henry of Andelys, The Battle of the Seven Arts,[12] described this change in allegorical terms: grammar goes to Paris from Orleans to do battle for the minds of the students, but is vanquished there by the forces of logic and dialectic; the students are immersed in the study of philosophy and have no time for the classics. Henry, who was a proponent of literary education, still had hopes for the future; he prophesied that in another thirty years new men would appear to revive grammatical and rhetorical studies. The author proved to be a bad prophet. By 1300 no one would have disputed with Peter of Spain when he wrote in his textbook on logic that "Dialectic is the art of arts and the science of sciences, possessing the way to the principles of all curriculum subjects."[13]

---

[12] John Lewis Paetow, ed. and tr., Two Medieval Satires on the University of Paris (Berkley: U. of California Press, 1927).

The recovery of Aristotle's works closely followed the revival of dialectic. Throughout the eleventh century, students of philosophy based their writings on the few fragments of ancient thought included in the "old logic" of Aristotle (the Categories and De interpretatione) and the related commentaries of Boethius and Porphyry. But in the twelfth century, translations from Greek and Arabic manuscripts gradually made available the rest of Aristotle's treatises. At first western scholars focused their interest on Aristotle's logical writings—the Prior analytics, the Posterior analytics, the Topics and the Sophistical Refutations. It was only later that the other treatises were accepted in general academic circles. The writings of Aristotle on science, metaphysics and ethics were at first regarded with suspicion by the church, but they were studied anyway and were gradually absorbed into the arts curriculum.

---

[13] Joseph P. Mullally, ed. and tr., The Summulae logicales of Peter of Spain (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1945), xxi.

The extent to which logic dominated the scholastic curriculum by the late Middle Ages can be seen by examining the arts statutes of any German university in the fifteenth century.[14] Normally for the bachelor's degree, the student was first required to have heard lectures and attended exercises on the "old logic," those parts of Aristotelian logic known before 1150, whose contents were mentioned previously. He also had to hear lectures on the "new logic" of Aristotle, although in some cases parts of it were left for the Masters degree. This consisted of the *Prior* and *Posterior analytics*, the *Topics* and *Sophistical Refutations*. A number of compendiums and handbooks on logic written by medieval authors supplemented the basic Aristotelian texts. At Leipzig,[15] Erfurt[16] and several other schools, lectures were given on the *logica Hesbri*, a late fourteenth-century work on rules for solving sophisms. At Heidelberg the statutes of 1452 demanded study of the logical compendium of Marsilius of Inghen, the first rector of the university,[17] while in its early years the University of Cologne required the study of the logic by John Buridan, the fourteenth-century Parisian master.[18]

---

[14] Curriculum requirements for some of the German universities can be found in the following works: Cologne (1388): Franz Joseph von Bianco, *Die Alte Universität Köln* (Cologne: Heberle, 1856), Anlage, 59-64; Greifswald (1456): Johann G. Kosegarten, *Geschichte der Universität Greifswald mit urkundlichen Beilagen* (Greifswald: C.A. Koch, 1857), I, 309; Erfurt (1412, 1449): J.C. Hermann Weissenborn, *Acten der Erfurter Universität* (Halle: Otto Hendel, 1884), II, 134-144; Freiburg-im-Breisgau (1484): Heinrich Schreiber, *Geschichte der Albert Ludwigs Universität zu Freiburg-im-Breisgau* (Freiburg: Wangler, 1857), I, 45; Vienna (1389): Alphons Lhotsky, *Die Wiener Artistenfakultät 1365-1497* (Vienna: Bohlhaus, 1965), 243-244; Heidelberg (1390): Eduard Winkelmann, *Urkundenbuch der Universität Heidelberg* (Heidelberg: Karl Winter ,1886), I, 31-44; Leipzig (1417, 1436, 1471): Friedrich Zarncke, *Die Statüten bucher der Universität Leipzig aus den ersten 150 Jahren ihres Bestehens* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1861), 314,397,405; Ingolstadt (1472): Carl Prantl, *Geschichte der Ludwig-Maximillians Universität zu München* (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1872), II, 49-54.

But more important than any of these other manuals was the *Summulae logicales* of Peter of Spain, perhaps the most influential work in the history of scholastic philosophy. Written sometime in the mid-thirteenth century, the *Summulae logicales* was a medieval "best seller." It was copied repeatedly in manuscript and went through at least 160 printed editions before the Reformation.[19] The author, born between 1210 and 1220, was a contemporary of Aquinas and studied under Albertus Magnus at Paris. He later entered church politics and was elected Pope in 1276; but he died one year later when the roof of his Vatican study fell in on him.

---

[15] Rudolf Helssig, "Die wissenschaftlichen Vorbedingungen für Baccalaureat in Artibus und Magisterium," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Leipzig* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1909), 57.

[16] Weissenborn, *op. cit.*, 34.

[17] Gerhard Ritter, *Die Heidelberger Universität* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1936), 167, note.

[18] von Bianco, *op. cit.*, Anlagen, 64.

[19] Mullally, *op. cit.*, 133-158.

The first part of his Summulae logicales was an introductory guide or text book on logic designed to familiarize the beginning student with the logic of Aristotle. The second part, known as the Little Logicals (Parva logicalia) contained seven original tracts by Peter himself, whose content constituted the most important single development in all of medieval logic. Simply stated, Peter hoped to remove the linguistic uncertainties from logical discourse by carefully investigating the properties of terms used in syllogism. Specifically, he dealt with the process of signification, by which a word becomes accepted as a sign for something, and the process of supposition, by which an already determined sign receives additional values and may be applied to something else.[20] In other words, signification dealt with the denotations of words while supposition dealt with their connotations. Peter also discussed other problems of language. For example he investigated what happened to the meaning of a noun when connected with verbs of various tenses or when modified by certain classes of adjectives. These discussions were important because the logician was treating many problems traditionally ascribed to grammar. In the writings of men like Peter of Spain, grammar was becoming a speculative study—a sure sign of logic's hold on medieval thought.

---

[20] "Suppositio est acceptio termini substantivi pro aliquo. Differunt autem suppositio et significatio, quia significatio fit per impositionem vocis ad significandum rem, sed suppositio est acceptio termini jam significantis rem pro aliquo . . . . Etiam hoc differunt, quia significatio est vocis, suppositio vero est termini jam compositi ex voce et significatione." ibid., 2-4.

Compared to logic, the other two elements in the *trivium*, rhetoric and grammar, received little attention in the universities of medieval Germany.[21] Normally to fulfill the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts degree, a student had to attend only one or two short lecture courses on grammar. In fact at Vienna,[22] Ingolstadt[23] and Heidelberg,[24] the statutes implied that the student could skip the grammar lectures entirely if he had previously studied the required texts at a local school.

---

[21] On medieval grammar, see: Louis John Paetow, *The Arts Course at Medieval Universities* (Champaign: University of Illinois, 1910); Dietrich Reichling, ed., *Das Doctrinale des Alexander de Villa-Dei* (Berlin: S. Hoffman, 1893); J.J. Baebler, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Lateinischen Grammatik im Mittelalter* (Halle: Waisenhauses, 1885).

[22] "Item talis debet audivisse ubicunque complete et sine dolo libros: primam et secundam partem Doctrinalis, secundem partem Grecismi; unum librum in rhetorica." Lhotsky, *op. cit.*, 236. It was required that all the other books be heard at Vienna or another university.

[23] "Debent audivisse hic aut alibi." Prantl, *op. cit.*, II, .

[24] "scholares ad gradum baccallariatus promevendi jurent, quod audiverint doctrinale Alexandri quod primam et secundam ejus partem et grecismum pro aliqua ejus parte vel quod alius in grammatica congrire sint eruditi." Winckelmann, *op.,cit.*, I, 34.

Moreover the requirements normally ended with the lectures; unlike logic, there was no need for weekly exercises and repetitions. In other words grammar was viewed as an unimportant subject, suitable only for young boys. Once the rudiments had been learned, students hurried on to the more exciting studies of logic and philosophy.

There were four or five basic texts used in the German schools and universities for instruction in Latin grammar. Two of these were products of the late classical period. Donatus, a fourth-century Roman who taught Latin to St. Jerome, wrote two commentaries on the parts of speech. The first, called the _ars minor_, was designed for beginners and was written in question and answer form. The second, the _ars grammatica_, was designed for more advanced students, but by the late Middle Ages, only the third part, the _Barbarismus_, was seriously studied. The second author, Priscian, taught grammar at Constantinople around 500 A.D.; his lectures were collected by one of his students into the _Institutionum grammaticarum libri XVIII_. Of these eighteen books, the first sixteen, called the _priscianus major_, dealt with the forms of speech, the last two, the _priscianus minor_, with syntax. By the fourteenth century neither of these works bore much resemblance to its original form. Generations of grammarians had altered the texts and buried them under a mass of glosses and commentaries. In many instances they had removed the original examples from classical literature and replaced them with citations from the Vulgate or the more acceptable Christian poets of late antiquity such as Prudentius.

In the early thirteenth century a number of medieval grammars appeared which supplemented or replaced those of Donatus and Priscian. By far the most widely studied of these new grammars was the *Doctrinale* of the Frenchman Alexander Villedieu, written in 1199. The *Doctrinale* contained twelve chapters, usually grouped into parts on etymology, syntax, accent and figures of speech. It was written entirely in verse to help the student memorize the rules. The book was incredibly popular. By the fourteenth century, to learn Latin grammar meant to study Alexander along with his inevitable commentators. The German researcher Dietrich Reichling has found 228 manuscripts of the work and 279 printed editions, 163 of which appeared before 1500.[25]

With Alexander, and to a greater extent with his later commentators, grammar became increasingly tied to logic and philosophy.[26] For most authors, the goal of instruction was no longer the writing and speaking of clear, elegant Latin; rather it was the learning of complex terminology and classifications to be used later in the study of logic. Grammarians became interested in teaching the general rules followed by the human mind in expressing itself, the same problem which had attracted Peter of Spain in his treatises on signification and supposition. Grammar came to be considered as a branch of philosophy and not surprisingly lost its ties with literature and poetry.[27] An anonymous writer of the period summed up well the position of the speculative grammarians:

---

[25] Reichling, *op. cit.*, XLIV.

[26] The best short summary on speculative grammar is Martin Grabmann, "Die geschichtliche Entwicklung der mittelalterlichen Sprachphilosophie und Sprachlogik," *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben*, III (Munich: Max Hueber, 1956), 243-253.

> He who knows grammar in one language, also knows it in another as far as the essentials are concerned. The fact that he cannot, however, speak another language, or understand those who speak it, arises from the difference of words and their formations which is accidental to grammar. [28]

To put it another way, a person could "know the essentials" of Latin grammar and not be able to read the first line from Caesar's Commentaries.

Thus the demands for a precise language to use in logical discourse turned Latin into a highly technical language far removed from classical usage. The frequent disputes about syntax occasionally led to some outlandish claims. In

---

[27] The following is a quote from a 1488 gloss on the Doctrinale: "Quis fuit grammaticae primus inventor? Primus inventor grammaticae positivae fuit metaphysicus et naturalis philosophus, quod ille considerans diversas proprietates, naturam et modas essendi rerum, rebus imposuit diversa nomina." Reichling, op. cit., XI.

[28] Quoted by Etienne Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (New York: Random House, 1955), 313.

1277, for example, some Oxford masters argued there was no real philosophical need for Latin noun and verb endings; according to them ego curret was just as correct as ego curro.[29] To the later humanists such attempts at language control were not only ungrammatical, but sure signs of medieval illiteracy and outright madness.

Rhetoric, the third subject of the trivium, received the least attention of all. The statutes of Freiburg,[30] Heidelberg[31] and Cologne[32] made no provision at all for the study of rhetoric. At Vienna,[33] Greifswald[34] and Ingolstadt[35] the Bachelors of Arts were required to have heard one lecture series on an unspecified book on rhetoric. But even at these schools the subject was not treated at all seriously. At Vienna it was classed with grammar as a subject which the student could avoid if he had studied it before coming to the University. At Greifswald the lectures could not have amounted to much, since they lasted only one month. At Erfurt, although provisions were made for lectures on rhetoric, the subject was not required for a degree. When in 1420 an Erfurt scholar drew up a list of the twenty-two books he had studied in preparation for his Bachelor's examination, he listed seventeen texts in logic, but not a single one in rhetoric.[36]

---

[29] Charles Homer Haskins, The Rise of the Universities (New York: Henry Holt, 1923), 74, 75; a similar instance at Paris was mentioned by the sixteenth-century French humanist, Peter Ramus; see Walter J. Ong, Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 75.

[30] Schreiber, op. cit., I, 45.

[31] Winckelmann, op. cit., 34.

[32] von Bianco, op. cit., 64.

[33] Lhotsky, op. cit., 236.

[34] Kosegarten, op. cit., I,-309.

[35] Prantl, op. cit., I, 57-58.

After completing his linguistical studies, the _artes sermonicales_, the student proceeded to the more specialized subjects. For the most part these specialized subjects meant more study of Aristotle. His works served as the basic text in astronomy, physics, metaphysics, biology and ethics. Of these works, those on "scientific subjects," especially physics, were most intensely studied. Metaphysics and ethics were less popular since a master could not say much on these subjects without embroiling himself in theology—something both theologian and philosopher wished to avoid. At Heidelberg, for example, records show that the University had difficulty throughout the fifteenth century finding men to lecture on these two subjects.[37] The old _quadrivium_ subjects— arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music—had a position in the curriculum similar to rhetoric. Some of the universities required the study of Euclid's geometry and some medieval arithmetic books for degrees; but as with rhetoric, the regulations were not strictly enforced. In fact two additions to the Ingolstadt statutes from the mid-1470's explicitly stated that no student had to study the old quadrivium subjects to fulfill the requirements for his degree.[38] When lectures were given on these subjects the student was welcome to pay his fee and listen, but he could expect that none of the material would appear on his final degree examinations.

---

[36] Lynn Thorndike, ed., _University Records and Life in the Middle Ages_ (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 296.

[37] Gerhard Ritter, _Studien zur Spätscholastik_ (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1922), II, 97; see also the general discussion by Ong, _op. cit._, 135-149.

After having received his Master of Arts degree, the student was permitted to begin study in one of the three higher faculties. If he chose theology he spent his first few years as a simple auditor, hearing lectures on the two main texts for scholastic theology, the Bible and the Sentences of Peter Lombard. Lombard's work dated from the mid-twelfth century and was a compilation of passages from a wide variety of authorities which expressed opinions on controversial topics in four areas—the trinity, creation, incarnation and the sacraments. After hearing these required lectures and passing the required examinations, the student became a

---

[38] "baccalarios non obligari ad audiendum musicam Myris, Latitudines formarum, Perspectivam communem, Proportiones breves, libros quator Euclidie; . . . loco illorum autem debent baccalarii audivisse libros de anima, libros posteriorum," and a year or so later: "Baccalarios vero non oportebit futuro ad gradum magisterii audire libros de Caelo et mundo, theoricas planetarum, Arithmeticam, ulteriores libros Topicorum et exercitium Ethicorum, nec eorum solvere pastus," Prantl, op. cit., II, 50,75.

Bachelor of Theology. As such he assumed part of the teaching burden. For two years he lectured to beginning students on the Bible as a cursus biblicus, and after this, he spent two more years on Peter Lombard as a sententiarius. When these lectures were finished he was required to participate in a great disputation in which he answered the questions posed to him by a presiding Doctor of Theology. He then had to spend a few more years at the university, studying, participating in disputations, lecturing and giving occasional sermons. Finally after a festive and largely ceremonial disputation, he became a Doctor of Theology and thereby reached the pinnacle of medieval scholarly attainment.

At Paris, this course of study lasted sixteen years. At the German universities an examination of the statutes shows that the course was generally shorter, lasting around twelve years. In practice, it was shortened even further for gifted or favored students. Luther, for example, took only five years to receive his Doctorate at Wittenberg, and his later opponent, Andreas Carlstadt, did the same in five and a half. Apparently the large number of German universities in the late fifteenth century had spread the academic talent so thin that the universities found the only way to fill vacancies in the higher faculties was to shave a few years off the requirements.

Ever since the criticisms of men like Luther and Erasmus, late scholastic theology has had few admirers. For most writers the great age of scholastic theology ended sometime in the mid-fourteenth century, and the years following were marked by "unoriginality" and increasing concern with "useless questions" and "sterile debates." But until more monographs appear on individual figures, nothing too definite can be said about the quality and nature of theological instruction in the German universities. Recently, for example, Heiko Obermann in his *Harvest of Medieval Theology*, has criticized the typical conception of theological decay and disintegration in the late Middle Ages. In the career of the German nominalist Gabriel Biel, he found "not the barren wastelands of sterile debates, but a richness of deep pastoral and searching theological concern."[39] Whether Biel was typical is still of course an open question.

Besides the alleged "sterility and uselessness" of their questions, late medieval theologians have also been criticized for neglecting the Bible and concentrating on the *Sentences*, a book which gave them a greater chance to display their dialectical skill and philosophical knowledge in discussing controversial points. Luther, for example, in his *Address to the German Nobility*, complained "Our worthy theologians have ceased from worrying and working. . .they leave the Bible alone and read the Sententiae."[40] At Paris, as of 1387, the successful completion of two examinations did in fact make it possible for a new Bachelor of Theology to bypass the Biblical lectures and go straight on to the Sentences.[41] There was no such regulation in the German universities, and at least theoretically, each Bachelor had to spend two years on the Bible as part of his degree requirements.

---

[39] Heiko Obermann, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 5.

But these lectures could not have been very thorough or profound, nor were they meant to be. Most statutes required each Bachelor to lecture on eighty chapters during a single academic year; if he lectured the normal two or three times a week, this meant he had to handle a new chapter at every lecture. As a result, the lecture consisted of little more than a reading of the text with the listeners following their own copies and making corrections; only at the end could the speaker remark on the general sense of the chapter and discuss a few of the key terms. Obviously there was little time for long excursions into metaphysics or dogma. The goal of the lectures was simply to acquaint the beginning student with the Bible. In fact some of the statutes specifically forbad complicated commentaries. At Freiburg the Bachelors were warned to stick to the text and the "more notable glosses," while completely omitting "superfluous glosses on logic and physics."[42] At Erfurt the statutes allowed lecturers "if they wish, to raise and solve literal doubts compendiously and briefly."[43]

---

[40] Martin Luther, Selections, ed., John Dillenberger (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 473.

[41] Heinrich Denifle, Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis, III (Paris: Delain, 1894), 441-442. Denifle remarks that "Lectura bibliae in oblivionem venit." II, 704, note 24.

The lectures of the Bachelors on the Sentences had the same goal as those on the Bible—to simply acquaint the student with the text of Lombard. In two years time all four books of Lombard had to be read; this meant that one distinction (a group of two to ten questions on a given topic) had to be covered in every lecture. This too did not leave time for extensive comment and interpretation, although the statutes generally had fewer restrictions about avoiding "superfluous questions." Those of Cologne warned the Bachelors to "read the text faithfully and not take it on themselves to propound on suspect doctrines;"[44] and those of Erfurt required them to read the text "word for word" and expound only "when the passage was difficult."[45]

---

[42] "textum cum notabilioribus glossematis declarando, supervacaneas aut logicas aut physicas glossas penitus omittendo," J. König, ed., "Statuta facultatis Theologice Catholici studii Freiburgensis," Freiburger Diocesan Archiv, 21 (1890), 13.

[43] "si voluerint, dubia literalia compendiose et breviter moveant et solvant," Weissenborn, op. cit., 55.

[44] von Bianco, op. cit., I, Anl. 39.

[45] "quod quilibet baccalarius legens sententias totum textum de verbo ad verbum et ipsum quando difficilis est, exponendo declaret." Weissenborn, op. cit., 56.

As a result of the short time available and the various statute restrictions on the Bachelors of Theology, the great theological commentaries had to come from the Doctors of Theology. The statutes of the German universities left it open to the Doctors of Theology whether they wanted to lecture on the Bible or the Sentences. The lists of books and manuscripts from the late fifteenth century shows a clear preference for the Sentences. Perhaps Biel was a typical example; he lectured to his students on the Sentences and used his knowledge of the Bible mainly in his sermons. When there were in fact lectures given on the Bible, they often turned out to be wide-ranging discussions of all kinds of questions, many of which had little relation to the Biblical text. We know for example that the Viennese theologian, Henry of Langenstein, used his lectures on the Bible as a starting point for lengthy expositions on astronomy and cosmology. In thirteen years of teaching he managed to finish only three or four chapters of Genesis.[46] Later in the 1450's Aeneas Sylvias wrote to a friend about an even more striking example; he knew a Viennese theologian, Thomas of Haselbach, who had spent twenty-two years lecturing on Isaiah and still had not completed the first chapter.[47]

---

[46] Ritter, Die Heidelberger Universität, 214.

[47] Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, Ausgewählte Texte, ed. Berthe Widmer (Basel: Schwabe, 1960), 279.

The reason for this lack of progress was not merely the predilection of the theologians for extensive commentary and metaphysical excursions; equally important was the fact that most of them were not in the least dedicated teachers. By the time they had become Doctors of Theology most of these men had rich benefices and held offices within their order or the Church which demanded long absences from the university. When they were present, it was considered enough for them to preside at examinations and disputations, give sermons and lecture when the spirit moved them. At Paris, for example, it was considered a sign of progress when the new statutes of 1452 required each Doctor of Theology to present a lecture at least once every two or three weeks.[48] And at Leipzig in the early sixteenth century, a theology student complained there were so few theology lectures, one would need the "years of Methusela" to complete the required courses.[49]

By the fifteenth century, the systematic study of scholastic philosophy and theology in Europe had been going on for almost three hundred years. Not surprisingly there had appeared a number of schools of thought which opposed each other on basic questions of methodology, epistemology and other issues. Thus the intellectual history of the Middle Ages is dotted with endless feuds among Albertists, Thomists, Scotists, Occamists and disciples of countless thinkers of lesser fame. As the names suggest, these schools developed when a group of philosophers and theologians adopted the doctrines of a single great thinker whose ideas they expounded and defended. By the fifteenth century, however, these dissimilar factions were generally lumped into one of two groups—the via antiqua and the via moderna.

---

[48] Charles Thurot, De l'organization de l'enseignement dans l'université de Paris au moyen-age (Paris: Dezobry, 1850), 159.

[49] W. Bruchmiller, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universitäten Leipzig und Wittenberg (Leipzig: Dieter, 1898), 6.

The via moderna included the followers of William of Ockham—men such as Buridan, Peter of Ailly, Albert of Saxony, Marsilius of Inghen and other thinkers from the fourteenth century. The via antiqua included the followers of Thomas Aquinas and a number of other thinkers from the thirteenth century such as Albertus Magnus, Bonaventure and Scotus.[50] By the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, the proponents of the via moderna dominated the University of Paris, and with few exceptions, the other northern European universities. But in the fifteenth century the disciples of the via antiqua grew in numbers and strength. And an important chapter in that century's history was the challenge of these men to the via moderna's monopoly of university education.

---

[50] In most cases the Scotists were classed among the antiqui, but there are examples of some Scotists who considered themselves as proponents of the via moderna; see Ritter, Studien zur Spätsscholastik, II, 71.

The question of what issues divided and distinguished the two groups in this period has never been adequately answered.[51] Most critics agree that the perennial medieval debate on universals was probably the most important point of controversy. The antiqui wanted to return to the epistemology of Thomas and Scotus—an epistemology which accepted the reality of universal concepts. The moderni followed Ockham and his nominalist followers who vigorously denied the realism of Aquinas and Scotus. But once this much has been said, there is wide disagreement on what other differences separated the two viae.

Gerhard Ritter, for example, has argued that teaching methods also divided the two groups. He asserted that the disciples of Ockham generally lectured and wrote according to the modus quaestionis. This method gave relatively little attention to the text as a whole; instead the lecturer chose a number of specific questions from the text, collected points of view from different authorites and finally solved the problem through a variety of logical and philosophical arguments. But as Ritter sees it, the proponents of the via antiqua a largely preferred the older lecture method, the modus expositionis. In this method, the lecturer adhered closely to the text; he read it, commented on it, defined the key terms and only at the end raised and briefly answered a few questions of his own choosing.

---

[51] Although it dates from the 1920's Ritter's Studien zur Spätscholastik, Part II, "Via antiqua und via moderna auf den deutschen Universitäten des XV Jahrhunderts" is still by far the best treatment of the subject; Friedrich Benary, Zur Geschichte der Stadt und Universität Erfurt am Ausgang des Mittelalter, Part III, "Via antiqua und via moderna auf den deutschen Hochschulen mit besonderer Berucksichtigung der Universität Erfurt,: (Gotha: Perthes, 1919), 1-72; see also literature cited below.

Some historians have argued that the basis of the controversy was in the area of logic. Carl Prantl, for example, in his Geschichte der Logik im Abendland suggested that the moderni favored the "terminist logic" of the kind written by Peter of Spain in the seventh part of the Summulae logicales.[52] In Prantl's view, the antiqui rejected the methods of Peter and sought to base the study of logic on the original Aristotelean texts. It is true that the work of Aquinas himself contained little terminist analysis; this is not surprising since interest in Peter of Spain became widespread only in the early fourteenth century—too late to influence Aquinas. Ritter has shown however that this did not hold true for the fifteenth century Thomists. By this time all scholastic logic was terminist, in that Scotists, Thomists and Occamists all studied and wrote commentaries on the work of Peter.[53] In fact Peter was sometimes more attractive to the antiqui than other writers on logic, since he was a realist on the question of universals.

---

[52] Carl Prantl, Geschichte der Logik im Abendland, IV (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1870), 145-148.

[53] See also the list compiled by Mullally, op. cit., 133-158.

At Heidelberg, for example the statutes of 1452 required a student in the *via antiqua* to study Peter of Spain; but a student in the *via moderna* was to read the logic of nominalist Marsilius of Inghen.[54]

Still another theory on the differences between the two *viae* has been set forth by Heinrich Hermelink.[55] In his analysis the conflict concerned university curriculum. To him the *moderni* were mainly logicians who neglected the "real" disciplines of the arts course such as mathematics, metaphysics and science. The *antiqui*, on the other hand, had strong interests in these "real" disciplines and worked for a more balanced program of studies. There is little evidence to support Hermelink's theory. In fact, a comparison of the statutes for the German universities shows that there was absolutely no difference between the curriculum requirements of the universities dominated by the *via moderna* and the *via antiqua*. The neglect of subjects such as mathematics, metaphysics and ethics was a characteristic of late scholasticism as a whole rather than any specific faction.

Whatever the reasons for the split may have been, they were serious enough to set off constant feuding and quarreling within the arts and theology faculties of the German universities throughout the fifteenth century. The first such conflict occurred at Cologne, the only one of the older German universities to entirely avoid the strict nominalism taught at Paris in the fourteenth century.[56] In 1425, however, a group of five German electors tried to change this situation.[57] The electors feared that with no *moderni* at Cologne, students and teachers would be susceptible to the extreme form of realism which had led to the heresies of Huss and Wycliff. They ordered an end to the teaching of Albertus Magnus and Aquinas and demanded the substitution of studies based on "Buridan, Marsilius and the like." They claimed that Albert and Aquinas were too difficult for young minds and were likely to lead them into error.[58] The masters of the University resisted the pressure from the electors and drew up a document to defend their position.[59] They stated (inaccurately) that both *viae* were taught at Cologne, denied that the *via antiqua* was more difficult than the *via moderna*, and dismissed the argument that the writings of a great churchman like Aquinas could ever lead to heresy. The electoral attempt to alter the teaching mehtods had no results; Cologne remained a bastion of Thomism until well after the Reformation.

---

[54] Ritter, *Die Heidelberger Universität*, I, 166, 167.

[55] Heinrich Hermelink, *Die theologische Fakultät Tübingen vor der Reformation* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1906), 87-169.

---

[56] Vienna, Heidelberg and Erfurt were all completely dominated by the *moderni*, as was probably the case with Leipzig; Rostock had some *antiqui* in its early years since a few teachers went there from Cologne; on Cologne see Robert Heiss, "Der Aristotelismus in der Artistenfakultät der alten Universität Köln," in *Festschrift zur Erinnerung an die Grundung der alten Universität Köln*, ed. Hubert Graven (Cologne, Schroder, 1938), 288-315.

[57] The electors were Conrad of Mainz, Dietrich of Cologne, Otto of Trier, Duke Frederich of Saxony and Louis of the Palatinate. Ritter, *Studien*, II, 40.

[58] ". . .etsi doctrina talium doctorum (Aquinas and Albert) non sit in se mala, transcendit tamen juvenum capacitatem; unde evenit, quod juvenes hujus doctrinae subtilia dicta et alta principia talem instructionem loqui prae sumentes incidunt in errores pernicosos; . . . .exemplum adest de pragensibus, quorum error ex tali doctrina emanavit. . ." Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik*, IV, 148.

This first clash between the two *viae* at Cologne was unique. Without exception the later conflicts involved attempts by realists to break the nominalist monopoly which existed almost everywhere except Cologne. The first such conflict took place at Heidelberg, a university with strong Occamist traditions.[60] In the 1440's a number of men who had studied in Paris began to agitate for the institution of teaching according to the *via antiqua*. The majority of the masters opposed such a change, and in 1452 the University council passed a resolution requiring every teacher to swear an oath to teach according to the method of the nominalist Marsilius of Inghen.[61] But the statutes reform of 1452, instigated by Elector Frederich I of the Palatinate, put an end to this oath. The new statutes ordered that both the via antiqua and via moderna should be taught at Heidelberg with equal status.[62] The nominalist masters fought this new measure, but the Elector was convinced that having teachers in both methods would be beneficial to the University. In the summer of 1452 he ordered that anyone not agreeing with the new order should "leave the city of Heidelberg and not return."[63] The statute was finally accepted, and the two viae continued as rivals at Heidelberg until after the Reformation.

---

[59] Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik*, IV, 149.

[60] On the conflict at Heidelberg see Ritter, *Studien*, II, 47-68.

[61] Winckelmann, *op. cit.*, II, 41, note 364.

Conflicts between the two groups increased in frequency and bitterness in the second half of the fifteenth century. All over northern Europe there were attempts to improve university education by returning to the older authorities such as Aquinas and Albertus Magnus. Such attempts were strongly opposed by proponents of the via moderna and were largely unsuccessful. At Paris, for example, King Louis XI outlawed the teaching of nominalism in 1473 only to reinstate it eight years later under pressure from the moderni.[64] In Germany the princes generally considered it advantageous to have both viae represented at the universities they patronized. The statutes for Ingolstadt (1472) and Basel (1477) literally called for two separate arts faculties; each via had its own officers and seal, and each granted its own degrees.[65] Beginning in 1477 the teaching of both the via antiqua and the via moderna was required at Tübingen[66] and Mainz.[67] In these cases the arts faculty was not divided; but the deacon had to alternate between the two viae and each group had its own burse where its students lived and studied. In 1479 the previously nominalist University of Greifswald began instruction in the via antiqua. To achieve this it brought in several masters from Cologne.[68] In 1484 Freiburg-im-Breisgau did the same thing.[69] In both cases these schools followed the example of Tübingen with alternating deacons, separate living quarters and separate lectures on key subjects.

---

[62] Ibid., I, 163.

[63] Ibid., II, 42, note 369.

[64] Augustin Renaudet, Préréforme et humanisme à Paris (Paris: Champion, 1953), 40-41.

If such measures as the division of the faculties and rotation of faculty offices were designed to alleviate the friction between the two viae, they were miserable failures. The records of the late fifteenth century are filled with evidence of constant strife and rivalry between the two groups. The events at Ingolstadt in the 1470's were not untypical. In 1475 the leader of the *via antiqui* complained to the University rector that the modernists, because of their numerical superiority in the university council, had passed a number of edicts favorable to themselves. A short time later fifty bachelors of the *via moderna* sent a document to Duke Ludwig of Bavaria accusing the Vice Chancellor of the University, a realist, of sowing discord, unfairly choosing examiners, and in general having the reputation of a thief.[70] At this point the Duke took measures to end the rivalries between the two factions; in 1477 he ordered that from then on there should be only one faculty of arts. But the members of the via antiqua refused to go along with the new arrangement; they split off again and continued to grant their own degrees. Thus in 1478 the Duke and his advisers went personally to Ingolstadt and issued a new set of statutes which called for a unified faculty of arts. In the very next year, however, the *antiqui* broke off again and invited all students wishing "sound teaching" to study with them. The conflicts ended only in 1481 when the Duke threatened fines and loss of salary for all masters not complying with the 1478 statutes.

---

[65] Prantl, Geschichte der Ludwig-Maximillians-Universität, I, 52-64.

[66] Rudolph Roth, Urkunden zur Geschichte der Universität Tübingen (Tübingen: Laupp, 1877), 327-330.

[67] Fritz Hermann, "Die Mainzer Bursen 'zum Algesheimer' und 'zum Schenkenberg' und ihre Statuten," Beiträge für Hessische Geschichte und Altertumskunde, N.F. IV (1907), 94-124.

[68] Kosegarten, op. cit., I, 132.

[69] Schreiber, op. cit., I, 60.

---

[70] All the documents relating to the conflicts are in Prantl, *Geschichte der Ludwigs-Maximillians Universität*, II, 72-90, numbers 9,10,11,13,14,15.

The split between the _viae_ was also a disruptive force among the students. Constant name-calling and even physical violence between the students of the two groups were common. At Heidelberg, for example, the realists complained to the university senate in 1497 that a group of nominalist students had run through their dwelling shouting such things as:

> We thirst for the blood of the realists; our swords must devour at least three realists; I will not leave this place until I have chopped off the limb of a realist!

In addition the realist students complained they had been called "Jew-children" because their living quarters were in the old Jewish neighborhood. Nor could the realists have been very happy in 1503 when some students of the _via moderna_ defended the following theses:

> Thomista stultior est omni homine
> Thomista non differt a Chimaera
> Realista non differt a Chimaera. 71

Although the proponents of the _via antiqua_ managed to establish themselves at most of the German universities by the end of the fifteenth century, it is doubtful that they caused any notable improvement in the quality of university education. In spite of the energy displayed by both sides in attacking each other, they actually agreed on most major points. In the arts faculty both groups taught logic as the basic subject,

---

[71] John Friedrich Hautz, _Geschichte der Universität Heidelberg_ (Mannheim: J. Schneider, 1862), I, 348,349.

used the same Aristotelian texts and generally ignored grammar, rhetoric and mathematics. In theology both groups used the Vulgate and Lombard's Sentences as the basis of instruction. And the continual feuding between the two groups was an unsettling influence in university life and a constant headache to administrators. Furthermore the need of having two lectures on important subjects only increased the universities' financial problems.

The previous pages have briefly described the university tradition in late medieval Germany. The schools were young by the standards of Paris and Oxford, but they had inherited conceptions about teaching and learning which were almost three centuries old. Few men in the Middle Ages had subjected these conceptions to any kind of serious criticism. As the university curriculum was taking shape in the twelfth century, a few thinkers such as John of Salisbury had opposed the growing interest in logic and had called for the retention of studies in rhetoric, poetry and the classics. But once the curriculum was established in the early 1200's, even the critics like these were stifled.

In the early fifteenth century, however, there were signs of growing dissatisfaction with traditional methods for teaching philosophy and theology. In Germany the churchman and philosopher Nicholas of Cusa deplored Aristotle's hold on the universities and called for instruction in Greek and Hebrew. In France John Gerson criticized the theology of his fellow Parisian masters for its lack of relevance to the every-day problems of the Christian layman. And in the low countries, Gerhard Groote, the founder of the devotia moderna, warned his disciples that scholastic philosophy and theology only damaged a Christian's soul. But even men like these—all great thinkers and religious leaders—failed to have any impact on the universities. In Germany the old scholastic traditions of the medieval universities began to change only in the second half of the fifteenth century under the impact of the growing humanist movement. Humanism and scholasticism—what the humanists thought of the medieval universities and how they changed them—will be the subject of the pages that follow.

CHAPTER II

HUMANIST BEGINNINGS

1450-1480

It was at the end of the fourteenth century that the first disciples of Renaissance humanism began appearing in northern Europe. For the first time, small groups of men in France and Germany began to feel the excitement of the Italians for classical literature and elegant expression. Professional academics, occupied as they were with the logical and metaphysical problems of scholastic philosophy, found little appeal in the literary pursuits of the humanists. Not one of these early northern humanists was in any way connected with a university. The first northerners attracted to humanism were the chancellery officials, councillors and secretaries who served the princes, nobles and churchmen of northern Europe. These men found humanism professionally valuable. Their careers demanded skill in composing documents, writing letters and delivering orations for ceremonial and diplomatic occasions. If Italian humanism could teach them to do these things with the elegance of Cicero or Quintillian, then humanism was certainly worthy of their interest and study.

Although humanism developed at different times in the countries of northern Europe, the chancellery was consistently its place of origin. In England, the first center of humanist interest was the court and chancellery of the great noble, Robert Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. He employed Italian humanists as secretaries and councillors; and it was their interest in literature and style which served as a model for the Englishmen around them.[1]

In France humanism originated in the same kind of environment. Its early disciples, Pierre and Gontier Col, Nicholas of Clamanges and Jean de Montreuil, all had careers as royal secretaries and chancellery officials. These men discussed classical literature among themselves and had an active correspondence with such Italian humanists as Leonardo Bruni, Niccolo Niccoli and Coluccio Salutati.[2]

Humanism came to the Empire shortly after 1350—earlier than anywhere else in northern Europe. As in England and France, it was at first located in a chancellery, this time in Prague at the chancellary of Emperor Charles IV of Bohemia.[3]

---

[1] Roberto Weiss, Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century (Oxford: Blackwell, 1941).

[2] A. Coville, Gontier et Pierre Col et l'humanisme en France au temps de Charles VI (Paris: Librairie Dorz, 1934).

[3] Konrad Burdach was the first historian to note the importance of the Bohemian chancellery in the early development of humanism. Some of his ideas, such as the importance he ascribed to Cola di Rienzo for this development, have been discarded, but his thesis on the importance of Neumarckt and his circle has

The leader of this early interest in humanism was Johann von Neumarckt, the Emperor's chancellor and main councillor. He accompanied the Emperor on several journeys to Italy where he met several early Italian humanists, including Petrarch himself. Neumarckt was impressed with the elegant Latin cultivated by the Italians and tried to transmit these high standards to his chancellery officials in Prague. For this purpose he composed and distributed a small booklet on correct Latin style. He also established a small circle of friends and correspondents in southeast Germany who shared his interests in classical literature. Thanks to Neumarckt, Prague remained a center of humanism until the early fifteenth century.

From Prague humanism spread to other cities of southeastern Germany, especially to Vienna. The exact channels of transmission cannot be precisely retraced. We know that Neumarckt corresponded with friends in the chancellery of the Austrian dukes in Vienna.[4] And contacts between Italians and Austrian officials were also frequent, especially after the imperial chancellery returned to Vienna in 1437. In the early fifteenth century, small humanist circles also developed among the patricians and city officials of towns like Nuremberg and

---

gained general acceptance. He expressed his ideas succinctly in "Zur Kenntniss altdeutscher Handschriften und zur Geschichte altdeutscher Litteratur und Kunst," Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen, VII (1891), 145-176, 432-488.

[4] Ibid., 477.

Augsburg. Men such as Nicholas of Wyle, Hermann Schedel and Heinrich Steinhöwel dabbled in Latin poetry and translated Latin classics into German for the benefit of noble friends.[5]

This early or "chancellery" phase of German humanism was a restricted movement with little impact on German culture as a whole. It was limited to a small number of men whose professional interests attracted them to the new humanist standards of elegant speech and writing. They were not educators or philosophers, and if they had any particular complaints about scholasticism, they did not express it in their writings. In the first half of the fifteenth century this situation slowly changed. Starting with the University of Vienna, humanism emerged from the writing rooms of the chancellery and entered the lecture halls of the university. Humanism and scholasticism would there have their first confrontation.

The University of Vienna owed its preeminence in the early development of northern European humanism to a number of factors.[6] Most important was the city's proximity to

---

[5] Hans Rupprich, Die Frühzeit des Humanismus und der Renaissance in Deutschland (Leipzig: Phillip Reclam, 1938); Paul Joachimsohn, "Frühhumanismus in Schwaben," Württembergische Vierteljahrshefte für Landesgeschichte, N.F. V (1896), 63-126, 256-291.

[6] There is extensive literature on the early history of the University of Vienna: Rudolph Kink, Geschichte der

Bohemia and the early cultivation of humanism in the Hapsburg court and chancellery. Perhaps as a result of courtly influence, there appears to have been more interest in rhetoric and allied subjects at Vienna than at the other German universities. As early as 1394 a Viennese master gave a series of lectures on the *poetria nova*, which probably consisted of lessons on the book of that name by Geoffroy de Vinsauf, a thirteenth-century Englishman.[7] Also called *de arte loquendi*, this versified work gave the reader rules for sentence structure and general composition. The library of the University also contained a number of manuscripts on rhetoric prior to 1450. Among them were three medieval treatises: the *De equivocis et synomymis poeticis*, by the thirteenth-century Frenchman John of Garland, and two anonymous works, the *Summaria primaria*, a book on poetry, and the *Tractatus de arte sermocinandi sive collationes faciendi*, a book on ceremonial speech-making. The library also contained a copy of Cicero's *De inventione rhetorica* and the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.[8] Whether

---

kaiserlichen Universität zu Wien, 2 vols. (Vienna: Carl Gerold, 1854); the second volume contains a collection of sources; Joseph Ritter von Aschbach, *Geschichte der Wiener Universität*, 2 vols. (Vienna: Universitätbuchhandlung, 1865, 1877); Gustav Bauch, *Die Reception des Humanismus in Wien* (Breslau: M.&H. Marcus, 1903); Karl Grossman, "Die Frühzeit des Humanismus in Wien bis zu Celtis Berufung," *Jahrbuch für Landeskunde von Niederösterreich*, N.F. XXII (1929), 150-325; Alphons Lhotsky, *Die Wiener Artistenfakultät* (Vienna: Herman Böhlaus, 1965); Adalbert Horawitz, "Der Humanismus in Wien," *Historisches Taschenbuch*, VI (1883), 137-200.

[7] Lhotsky, *op. cit.*, 73, 74. [8] *Ibid.*, 75.

these books were lectured on, or whether they were privately studied by small groups of scholars cannot be determined. But their presence shows that some interest in rhetoric did exist in the University in its early years.

The strength of "chancellery humanism" in Vienna also explains the early study of the *ars dictandi*, *ars epistolandi* and *ars notarius* at the University. Sometimes called "the business course" of the medieval universities, these subjects taught the proper methods for giving speeches, composing letters and drawing up legal documents. As such, they were especially practical for students planning to enter law or the service of a prince or city. With their concern for proper Latin style and composition, the teachers of these subjects were precursors of the later humanists.[9] Before 1450 there were at least four Viennese masters who wrote books and probably gave lessons on these topics. Still in the Viennese library are the *Correctia* (1404) of Johannes Studens, the *Tractatus rhetorice lectus et pronunciatus* (1427) by Andreas Santperg, the undated *Tractaculus de usu et modo dictandi* of Jodocus von Heilbronn and the anonymous *Rhetorica bona et perutilis*.[10] Whether additional books existed and how many students they attracted are questions which cannot be answered. As with the books on rhetoric, these works indicate at the very least that an interest in these subjects existed which was unique among the German universities.

---

[9] Grossman, *op. cit.*, 221-227, was the first to note the importance of the *ars dictandi* and *epistolandi* at Vienna; see also Lhotsky, *op. cit.*, 75-77.

[10] *Ibid.*, 73,74.

There is also some evidence in the University records of dissatisfaction with traditional scholastic methods—a condition which may have speeded the reception of humanism at Vienna. In the winter of 1422, for example, the arts faculty disciplined a young magister, Christiann von Braunstein, who had attacked the amount of logical argumentation in disputations. Braunstein had publicly claimed that truth could be found and defective reasoning avoided without recourse to a lot of complicated syllogizing. He also argued that the Viennese disputations were nothing more than fantasmata which confused the students.[11] The council members considered these statements to be "against the honor of the faculty and the older masters," and they suspended Braunstein until he apologized the following spring.

Since nothing is known about Braunstein's life or his circle of friends, it is futile to speculate on the motives for his attack. Aschbach, the nineteenth-century historian of the University, depicted the affair as the first blow of a bold anti-scholastic movement among younger teachers in the arts faculty.[12] But there is little evidence to uphold this theory. Braunstein's antipathy to logic may have derived from travel in Italy or even from reading Gerson. On the other hand it may have resulted from personal pique or momentary bad temper.

---

[11] The records of the arts faculty read as follows: "Et proposuit decanus primo, quomodo magister Christannus de Braunstain satis indiscrete se tenuisset in responsione sua in quodlibeto, quia ipse posuit unam propositionem, quod omnes veritates et falsitates, etiam defectus paralogismorum, solvari possent non ponendo suppositiones, ampliationes, restrictiones etc. Ex qua intulit, quod disputata magistrorum super eisdem essent fantasmata et destructiones scolarium et tituli ficti. Quod apparuit decano et suis conciliariis esse contra honorem facultatis et magistrorum antiquorum, qui in illa diu famata et approbata doctrina frucuoissime laboraverunt." Ibid., 94, note.

Six years later, in 1428, the University records tell of new criticisms of traditional scholastic methods. These criticisms came from a group of masters and bachelors who directed small review classes (resumptiones)in grammar to supplement the main lectures. The object of their attack was the "speculative grammar" taught at the medieval universities. They proposed that instruction in review classes be separated from the metaphysical and logical discussions of speech with which it was normally connected. They demanded that teachers should make no mention of logical concepts, but stick to "words and writing, by which pure grammarians have treated grammar." They further proposed that this instruction be based on the text of Donatus and the first and second parts of the Doctrinale of Alexander de Villedieu. According to the

---

[11] Aschbach, op. cit., I, 345.

records, the council of the arts faculty approved the proposals.[13] Since Viennese humanists were still making the same criticisms of grammar teaching in the 1480's and 90's, it is doubtful if the reforms were carried out. And even if the changes had been implemented, it would have meant only moderate reform: nothing for example, was said about the lectures in grammar, which, it may be assumed would have continued to treat the traditional speculative grammar. Nor were the required texts anything new: Donatus had been in use throughout the Middle Ages, Alexander since the end of the thirteenth century.

Yet it would be tempting to see this early attempt at grammar reform as the first sign of humanist influence at the University of Vienna. Surely an important part of the later humanist program was to break the connection fabricated in the Middle Ages between grammar and logic. Had these young masters traveled in Italy? Did they have ties with the Hapsburg court or chancellery? Unfortunately the University records do not even tell us their names.

---

[13] "alius articulus fuit ad audiendum relationem deputatorum ex parte resumptionum, et deputati obtulerunt quandam cedulam facultati continentum modum resumendi promovendis in artibus tunc per facultatem approbata fuit. Cuius tenor sequitur in hunc modum: 'Primo apparuit, quod resumentes in grammatica debeant procedere grammaticaliter et non metaphisicaliter nec loycaliter nullam facientes mentionem de mentalibus ut conceptibus vel actibus, sed de vocibus et scriptis, de quibus puri grammatici grammaticam tradiderunt, scilicet procedentes per casus, declinationes, tempora, conjugationes, comparationes et alia accidentia grammaticalia partium orationis declinabilium et indeclinabilium. . . ." Kink, op. cit., II, 274, 275.

In summary, by 1440 conditions at the University of Vienna seemed favorable for the reception of humanism. The Austrian chancellery had long been a center of humanist interest. Medieval handbooks on related subjects had been sporadically used since the 1390's. And there seems to have been willingness in some quarters to criticize traditional teaching methods. Yet there still had not been formal "humanist lectures"—lectures on rhetoric and poetry with classical writers as authorities. Perhaps what was needed was some direct contact with a professional humanist from Italy.

In the 1440's the colorful Italian humanist Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini offered the University a chance for such contact. In 1442 he had become Emperor Frederick III's secretary, a position which brought him to Vienna. Aeneas's importance as the great "apostle of humanism" in Germany has no doubt been exaggerated by some authors.[14] His influence was mainly restricted to a small group of admirers within the Austrian nobility and imperial chancellery. But he also had friends who were academics, and there can be little doubt that in an informal way he helped speed the reception of humanism at the University.

Aeneas himself thought little of the University of Vienna. In a letter he wrote to a friend in the late 1440's he gave his impressions of the school. The students, he felt, were a lazy lot, given to drunkeness and general troublemaking. He found the subject matter and teaching methods even more disappointing. He felt it was a "very great fault" that so much time was spent on dialectic, at the expense of other subjects. "Those who receive the title of master of arts are mostly examined in this one art." On the otherhand, music, rhetoric, poetry and arithmetic were unknown, although he conceded that one "unknown was unskillfully offering courses on letter-writing and metrification." Finally, he could scarcely find a single master who owned a copy of Aristotle or any other philosopher; all they had, he complained, were commentaries.[15]

---

[14] See Georg Voigt, Enea Silvo de 'Piccolomini, II (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1862).

Aeneas's only official contact with the University came in 1448 when he participated in a special disputation. The members of the University and even the Emperor and his court came out to hear the famous Italian. The presiding master presented Aeneas with three questions. Two of them were serious: first, "whether prudence was identical with the science of morals taught in the books of Ethics, Politics and Economics and in canon and civil law," and second, "why there were so few poets in the present day, although many consider them to be useful and necessary." The third question was asked as a joke: "why cheap skins of dead animals and old cloths with wax were sold for such high prices in the chancelleries."[16] For our purposes, the questions themselves are more significant than Aeneas's answers. The first two show that the University officials considered poetry and moral philosophy two subjects on which a humanist was competent to speak. As Kristeller has pointed out, at the Italian universities the course on moral philosophy was a source of friction between humanists and scholastics since both groups considered themselves better qualified to teach the subject.[17] The third question shows the connection in the University's mind between humanism and the chancelleries.

---

[15] "Maximum autem Hujus gymnasii vitium est quod nimis diutinam operam in dialectica nimiumque temporis in re non magni fructus terunt. Qui magisterii artium titulo decorantur, hac una in arte maxime examinantur. Ceterum neque musice neque rhetorice neque arithmetice curam gerunt, quamvis metra quedam et epistolas ab aliis editas imperite exhibentem magistrandum compellant. Oratorica et poetica apud eum penitus incognita, quibus omne studium in elenchis est vanisque cavillationibus, solidi haud quaquam multum. Qui libros Aristotelis et aliorum philosophorum habeant raros invenies, commentariis plerumque utuntur." Eneas Silvius Piccolomini, Briefwechsel, Rudolf Wolkan, ed. (Vienna: Universitäts Buchhändler, 1909), 81, 82. Wolkan dates the letter from 1438, but it more likely comes from around 1450; see discussion by Lhotsky, op. cit., 136.

Several years after Aeneas's disputation, another

---

[16] the questions were: "utrum prudentia sit idem habitus cum scientia morali tradita in libro ethicorum, polliticorum, Iconomicorum et in libris canonum et legum; cur poete nostris temporibus sint adeo pauci, cum videantur multum utiles et necessarii; cur viles cutes cadaverum et antique camisile cum cera in cancellariis venduntur pro optima minera;" Aeneas's response can be found in Lhotsky, op. cit., 262-273.

[17] Paul O. Kristeller, Renaissance Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 106.

Italian, William of Savona, was active in Vienna.[18] This Franciscan, who in the 1450's lived at a nearby convent in Klosterneuburg, was less illustrious than Aeneas, but perhaps had more influence on the University. He was one of the first to give lectures on rhetoric according to the new humanist standards. He was undoubtedly "the certain Genoese monk" which Aeneas mentioned in 1453 as lecturing to large crowds.[19] But he left the Vienna area in 1454, and his later activity is unknown.

The precise influence of the two Italians is not certain, but it is probably no accident that in 1451 formal "humanist" lectures began at the University of Vienna. In that year the records show that Phillip Mautther lectured on the *Rhetorica ad Herrenium* and Paul Swicker of Bamberg on Terence. These two men gave up their lectures after one year, but in the middle of the decade new men resumed them. George Peuerbach lectured on Vergil's *Aeneid* in 1454, on Juvenal in 1456, on Ciccero and Horace in 1458 and again on Vergil in 1480. In this same period Johann Mandl lectured on Terence and Lucan, and in 1461 Johann Regiomantanus lectured on Vergil's *Bucolics*.[20]

For all but two of these men only scraps of biographical data are available, and it is difficult to identify the influences which led them to humanism. Johann Mandl, a Bavarian, definitely was influenced by Aeneas Sylvius. He began attending the University of Vienna in 1442, and carried on an active correspondence with the Italian humanist in the late forties and fifties. He left the university in 1458 to serve as a secretary for several southeast German bishops. Swicker later taught in the law faculty, a fact which raises the possibility that his humanist interests stemmed from legal studies at Bologna or Pavia. All we know of Mautther is that he first matriculated at Vienna in 1429.

---

[18] Grossman, *op. cit*., 230.

[19] Piccolomini, *Briefwechsel*, II, 321.

[20] Aschbach, *op. cit*., I, 353; Grossman, *op. cit*., 227; Lhotsky, *op. cit*., 127.

Peuerbach and his disciple, Regiomantanus, stood far above the others in their intellectual achievements. Both combined an interest in astronomy and at least a mild commitment to humanist educational theories which they absorbed through travel in Italy. After studying at Vienna in the mid-forties (where he probably became acquainted with Aeneas Sylvius), Peuerbach left for a six-year stay in Italy, during which he studied and taught astronomy at the University of Ferrara. When he returned to Vienna in 1454, he served as court astronomer for Emperor Frederick III, wrote on astronomy and mathematics and lectured on the classics at the University. Like Peuerbach, Regiomantanus studied at Ferrara and also at the University of Padua. His career at the University of Vienna was a short one however; when Peuerbach died in 1461, Regiomantanus left Vienna and never returned.

Unfortunately these early Viennese humanists wrote very little which has been preserved, so it is difficult to gauge their attitudes toward scholasticism. But from the available evidence, it appears that they were not outspoken critics of traditional methods. One clue is furnished by a disputation in which Peuerbach participated in 1458. He answered three questions—two on astronomy and one on a humanist theme:

> to what extent the poetical or rhetorical art approaches and includes similes and metaphors—to be accepted according to the use of the poets, to be rejected in that fables and myths belong to natural and moral philosophy, while oratory and poetry are only linguistical disciplines. 21

What was implied was a question of the status of poetry and rhetoric within the hierarchy of disciplines. Were they merely "linguistical disciplines" (suited for young boys) or were their practitioners competent to speak on subjects normally reserved for philosophers? Peuerbach took the side of the orators and poets, but actually devoted little time to the question itself. Most of his speech was a simple encomium to the studia humanitas—history, poetry and rhetoric. There was an implicit criticism of the scholastics because of their ignorance and neglect of these subjects, but the speech contained no direct attack on their methods. Another brief document relating to Peuerbach's humanist teaching also shows no great antipathy

---

[21] Grossman, op. cit., 345, ff.

to scholasticism. In introducing his lectures on the Rhetorica ad Herennium in 1458, he promised his students they would learn to speak Latin "clearly and elegantly." But he made no claims that rhetoric was superior to philosophy or that students should neglect their dialectical studies.[22]

The importance of Peuerbach to Viennese humanism is shown by the fact that after his death in 1461, lectures on classical literature stopped for almost ten years. In general the 1460's were years of decline for the University. Emperor Frederick III was involved in a political struggle with his brother Archduke Albrecht VI, and when Vienna and the University showed support for Albrecht, the Emperor withdrew some of his financial aid to the school. The number of students and teachers declined severely. In spite of difficulties the humanist interests of the 1450's did not completely disappear. In 1468, for example, the arts faculty purchased a large number of humanist texts for the library. On October 21, the faculty council met "to hear a proposition of the deacon for a notable opportunity and increment for the faculty." There was, the records state, "a merchant of Verona" in Vienna "offering for sale books concerning the humanities and the history of the whole world which are at the least truly useful and would be to the perpetual glory of the faculty."[23] Then on November 17, the records report the purchase of the following books: Boccaccio's *Geneology of the Gods*, Petrarch's letters, Guarino Verona's commentary on Cicero's rhetoric, Gasparino Barizza's *Exordia et epistole*, Antonius Mancinello's *Exordia in lecturam rhetoricorum*, Valla's *Elegantiae* and a *Descriptio urbis Rome*, perhaps the *Roma instaurata* of Flavio Biondo.[24] And seven years later the faculty purchased a number of new Italian humanist translations of Aristotle. When recording the purchase in the faculty minutes, the humanistically-inclined deacon, Paul von Stockerau, expressed hope that the professors would use the new translations in their courses so "we might return a little from the dregs to the bright sources of the philosophers."[25]

---

[22] Karl Grossman, "Eine Ansprache Georgs von Peuerbach an seine Hörer," Mittheilungen des österreichischen Institut für Geschichtsforschung, XLII (1927), 359-361.

Beginning in 1469, lectures on humanist texts resumed after a nine year hiatus. During the 1470's nine men lectured on a variety of classical authors; Cicero and Horace were the most popular, but Vergil and Seneca also received attention.[26] Of these nine lecturers only three, Wolfgang Hayden, Siegmund von Schärding, and Dionysius de Abboth, a Hungarian, left no clues about their later careers. Two others, Paul von Stockerau and Bernard Prepost, went on to study theology at Vienna and were elected a number of times to the office of deacon or rector.[27] Georg Pattersdorfer remained as a teacher in the arts faculty and also was deacon several times in the period up to 1499. Johann Goldberger taught in the arts faculty until the mid-eighties when he became a teacher at the local school connected with St. Stephen's cathedral. The last two men, Johann Rauch[28] and Bernard Perger, both became lawyers. Perger, who traveled extensively in Italy and served for a time as an imperialcouncilor, became the superintendant of the University in the 1490's and played an important role in the development of humanism at that time.

---

[23] ". . .congregata fuit facultas ad horam primam per juramentum super articulo infrascripto ad audiendum proposicionem decani, notabile commodum et incrementum facultatis concernentem. Et proposuit sub hac forma: Quidam mercator Veronensis cartos et notabiles habet libros venales artem humanitatis et hystorias tocius mundi respicientes, qui profecto perutiles essent imo et ad perpetuum decus facultati." Theodor Gottlieb, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Osterreichs*, I (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1915,) 481.

[24] *Ibid*., 482.

[25] "Nam Paulo ante conclusum erat quosdam textus oportere haberi in lectionibus baccaloriumn ut vel sic paulum ex fecibus at nitidos philosophorum fontes rediremus," *ibid*., 486.

In the 1480's the University was again in difficulty and once more humanist interests declined. In 1481 the plague closed the school completely. And later, the Hungarians, who were at war with the Emperor, placed Vienna under a siege and occupied it between 1485 and 1490. Despite the setbacks of the 1460's and 1480's humanist studies at Vienna had made rapid progress—many times more rapid than at any other university in the Empire. Nor does there seem to have been any widespread scholastic opposition to these new studies. As early as the 1420's the arts faculty had approved a reform of grammar instruction; later it approved the purchase of a large number of humanist texts and made no effort to hinder the teachers who wished to lecture on classical authors. Moreover, teachers of humanist subjects were regularly elected to the positions of deacon of the arts faculty and rector of the University. At least three of these men went on to careers as professional scholastic theologians and philosophers. In fact between 1450 and 1480 there is only one concrete sign of opposition to humanism at the University of Vienna.

---

[26] Lhotsky, op. cit., 168, 169.

[27] Aschbach, op. cit., II, 447-455, has listed the rectors and deacons between 1466 and 1520.

[28] "Johann Rauch, Jr.B." is listed as the procurator of the Rhenish nation in 1475. Aschbach, op. cit., II, 456.

This opposition came from Konrad Säldner, the theologian who had presided at Peuerbach's disputation in 1458. Having been at Vienna as a student or teacher since the early 1430's, Säldner had seen the arrival of Aeneas Sylvius and the growing interest in poetry and classical literature in the 1450's. At about the same time as Peuerbach's disputation, he discussed these new studies in a series of letters with an Augsburg patrician, Sigismund Gossembrot. Gossembrot, who was not connected with any university, had traveled in Italy and was the leader of a small humanist circle in Augsburg. How he came to know

Säldner is not certain, but on April 24, 1457, he sent the theologian a letter in which he praised his humanist pursuits.[29] Gossembrot's letter has not been preserved, but it apparently disturbed Säldner, for on September 19, 1457, he sent Gossembrot a letter "assailing the defenders of poetry and asserting that theology can be well-enough taught, adopted and defended without poetry."[30]

Säldner's main reproach against the humanists or "poets," as he called them, was that they were not truly learned. To him, this meant that they knew nothing of the traditional scholastic curriculum. They claimed, for example, to be writers of elegant Latin, yet they were ignorant of the basic rules of grammar. For Säldner, of course, grammar meant the speculative grammar taught in the universities, which was closely tied to logic. In a probable reference to Aeneas Sylvius, he wondered "that there are some in the present with the name poet laureate who do not yet know grammar easily and systematically in its four species, orthography, etymology, syntax and accent, and have not intelligently studied theoretical rhetoric.[31] And in another reference to Aeneas, Säldner complained that the humanists did not dispute in the accepted manner. "These modern poets," he wrote, "who are not schooled in the seven liberal arts, ignore the rules of speculative grammar and rational sciences such as logic," and are "inflated with the high bombast of their inspiration."[32]

---

[29] The available sources have been collected by Wilhelm Wattenbach, "Sigismund Gossembrot als Vorkämpfer der Humanisten und seine Gegner," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, XXV (1873), 36-68.

[30] "Responsum invehens in poetrie defensores Theologiamque defendens absque poetria sufficienter posse monstrari persuaderi ac defendi, per vanerabililim dominum Maystrum Cunradum Säldner sacre theologie baccalareum formatum. . . ." *ibid.*, 38.

Säldner also argued that the study of poetry was wasteful and frivolous. Many men, he pointed out, have become famous without ever having read a scrap of poetry. Among the notables he named to support his argument were the famous Parisian theologian, Jean Gerson, and a number of Viennese scholars, such as Henry of Langenstein, Henry of Oyta and Nicholas of Dinckelsbühl.[33] He also attacked Gossembrot's argument that the study of poetry could help the theologian by offering him inspiration and improving his style. In Säldner's opinion, natural and moral philosophy were the true basis of theology, not poetry. How could poetry be the handmaiden of theology, he asked, when theology had been studied for so many years without any knowledge of poetry?[34] He added that the poets were mere stylists and knew nothing of more serious matters.

---

[31] "Et apud me bene miror, quod jam temporis non nulli sunt poete nomine laureati, qui nondum grammatice elementa expedite et doctrinaliter quatuor suis in speciebus, orthographis, scilicet, ethimoloia, dyasintheca et prosodia, agnorunt, . . ." ibid., 38.

[32] "Et quod plus est, non vidi audivive temporis modo nominatos poetas in septem liberalibus artibus perfecte fundatos, quin certe grammatice speculative seu doctrinalis ignaros, cum vere rhetorice principiis modis et coloribus, prorsus quoque sine rationalibus scientie, scilicet logice, vero disputandi modo, sed alti spiritus tumore inflatos." ibid., 39.

[33] He also named some more obscure figures: Petri de Pulca, Lamperti de Gellria, Petri Pyrchwart, Johannis Nider, Cunradi Herbst, Johannis Geuss, Narcissi Hercz, Johannis Hymel and H. de Colonia. ibid., 39.

Säldner tried to make it clear that he was not against all poets, only the modern ones. In his opinion, the older "Christian poets" such as Lactantius, and even the more acceptable Latin poets such as Vergil, were not one-sided men, but were acquainted with the precepts of philosophy. But even the study of these men held dangers. He feared that students would waste time on these pleasurable pursuits and neglect theology and moral philosophy—subjects "more suitable to the glory of God and his hope of improving the church militant."[35] He concluded his letter by urging Gossembrot to give up his humanist studies and spend his time on devotional literature and writings of Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome and Bernard. These works, said

---

[34] "Et ecce! si illa sic pro nunc dicta poesis famula existeret theosis necessaria, o quam sepius atque sepius hec ipsa domina et regina delicatissima theologia sine illa ambularet pedissequa et measset perutili ministra sacrata poetica necessaria. . . ." _ibid_., 40.

[35] ". . .sed timeo, quod non spero, ne vestri animi amor nimium in huiuscemodi volvatur humanarum arcium minus utilium studio, utilius perdendo aut negligendo gimnasium in moralibus et theologicis magis ad dei gloriam sueque sponse militantis ecclesie profectum. . ." _ibid_., 41.

Säldner, were much more suitable for the pious Christian layman.

Gossembrot replied to Säldner, but except for a small, unimportant fragment, the letter has been lost. Säldner's largely repetitive second letter has been preserved, however. Again he warned of spending too much time with poetry, and once more listed the great thinkers of the past who had never studied it. He reiterated that he was not against poetry as such, but only its modern practitioners. According to Säldner, these "new poets" cared nothing for true learning; they only sought glory and wealth through their literary pursuits and avoided the more difficult and useful disciplines such as law, theology and medicine.

What was new in Säldner's second letter was his direct attacks on the Italian humanists. Gossembrot had apparently mentioned a number of Italians as praiseworthy examples of modern humanism. Säldner was not impressed however. Guarino of Verona, for example, could not amount to much, since as far as he, Säldner, knew, no one in Austria, Bavaria, Hungary or Bohemia had ever heard of him. "How can the honors of your Guarino resound all over the world, when most of the provinces of the earth avoid proclaiming a knowledge of his glory."[36]

---

[36] "Somnianti mihi loqueris, gravique de somno exparrectus, ut dum loquar, prius nonquam ego glorie favillam sive in Austria, Bavarie, Hungarie vel Bohemie partibus musitando de ejusmodi percepi. Eygya, vir prudentissime, quomodo ejusmodi

Nor had he ever heard of Valla. If his memory served him correctly he remembered that Poggio had once offered something or other on rhetoric; but he added that he had not liked it. Gossembrot had also praised Bruni as a translator and editor of Aristotle and other Greek authors. Säldner doubted that these works could be very valuable, and warned his correspondent not to honor the compiler of such volumes more than God.[37] He conceded that the study of such men might improve Latin style; more likely, however, one would end up like the person who studied poetry for thirty years and still did not know the name of Aeneas's wife.

Considering Säldner's educational experience, it is not surprising that he was unfamiliar with any of the Italian humanists. It is surprising that he rejected them without having read any of their works. But apparently the simple fact that they were Italians made them suspect to the Viennese theologian. He wrote that since the break up of the Church councils the Italians had done nothing valuable on "the higher sciences and morals."[38] He could only grieve that "the Italians

---

Guarini tui honores ubilibet terrarum resonant, cum plurime terrarum provincie illius subterfugiant proclamatam glorie noticiam?" ibid., 46,47.

[37] "Nec tamen compilatorem operis sive voluminis ejusmodi tanquam deum venerareris, Nescio quali studio hic liber sit colendis: puto etsi sic, vix parvo." ibid., 52.

[38] Et si is Ytalicus extat seu extitit, eo minus mihi fidem firmas, quin potius infirmas, cum pauca scientiarum superiorum

are occupied in studies of this kind of vanity, to me justifiably unknown, and are not occupied in exertions in those better and healthier doctrines of morals and faith such as theology and moral philosophy."[39] In general, the Italians were "fickle and unstable men given to coveting avarice, luxury and pride."[40] Taking a verse from Jeremiah VI: 13, he prophesied dire results if men followed such guides: "For from the least of them even onto the greatest of them everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even onto the priest everyone dealeth falsely." For all these reasons he again advised Gossembrot to devote his time to homilies, collections of sermons, and the Bible.

Whether Säldner's ideas were typical of a body of opinion within the University is not certain. But as stated previously, there were no other indications of opposition to humanism at Vienna between 1450 and 1480. There are a number of reasons why the majority of scholastics felt no threat from the early humanists. First, the number of men with humanist

---

sive morum fundamenta in sancte militantis ecclesie profectum tempore nunc nostro moderno post conciliorum abjectionem generalium sanctorum de harum partium viris literatis senserim." *ibid*., 47.

[39] "Et certe heu doleo, quod Itali sic huiuscemodi vanitatis studiis occupantur, mihi recte ignote, et non illi meiorum et saniorum doctrinarum in moribus et fide occupantur sudoribus, theologe scilicet et moralis philosophie," *ibid*., 50.

[40] ". . .it est homines vagi et instabiles, avaricie, luxurie atque superbie concupiscentis deduti," *ibid*., 48, 49.

interests was still small. While in a given year there were between fifty and one hundred teaching masters in the faculty of arts, only one or two men ever lectured on classical literature. Furthermore, these men were in no sense professional humanists; they all pursued humanism as a sidelight to their interests in law, theology or science. Finally, they were not feverish reformers or outspoken critics of traditional university practices. They felt that the study of rhetoric and poetry might improve Latin style, but they also conceded that a student's main concern should still be logic and philosophy.

While Vienna was the undisputed leader in the early reception of humanism, other German universities were making far less spectacular progress. Among them, the University of Heidelberg was probably a distant second to Vienna.[41] The early development of humanism in the Rhineland was in some respects similar to what had occurred in Vienna. The chancellery officials and councillors of the Palatine Elector had absorbed some humanist interests during their participation in the

---

[41] Karl Hartfelder, "Heidelberg und der Humanismus," *Zeitschrift für allegemeine Geschichte*, II (1885), 177-195, 671-696; Ludwig Geiger, "Der Humanismus an der Universität Heidelberg," *Die Nation*, III no. 46 (August 14, 1886), 677-680; Gerhard Ritter, *Die Heidelberger Universität*, 449-491; Karl Hartfelder, "Zur Gelehrtengeschichte Heidelbergs am Ende des Mittelalters," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, N.F. VI (1891), 141-171.

Church councils at Constance and Basel. As early as the 1430's the diplomat and jurist Ludwig von Ast collected humanist manuscripts and dotted his letters with classical references. An Italian humanist, Arriginus, who directed a school in Plassenburg, also stimulated humanist interests at the Palatine court through his correspondence with the Elector. Finally there were the usual Italian-educated physicians and jurists on the Heidelberg faculty who had an acquaintance with humanism. Erhard Knob, a physician, composed a handbook on rhetoric in 1453, and Johann Wildenhertz, a lawyer and a later patron of humanism at the University, may even have given some lectures on the classics in the early 1450's.[42]

But humanism had no real impact on the University until 1456, the year of the arrival of the "wandering poet" Peter Luder.[43] Luder was a new type of figure in the history of German humanism. Although he had studied some medicine, his interest in the studia humanitatis was not a sidelight to more serious studies in other disciplines. Unlike the men who had given humanist lectures at Vienna, Luder styled himself as a "poet" and nothing else. Would this make a difference in the reception he received from the scholastic professors? Luder was born sometime before 1420 in Kislau, a small village north of Heidelberg.[44] After studying for a time at Heidelberg, he left for Italy without having gained a degree. He saw Rome, traveled to Greece, served as a notary in Venice, met the Italian humanist Guarino of Verona and finally studied medicine at Padua. His contact with Guarino and his studies of medicine meant that Luder learned both humanist literature and scholastic natural philosophy in Italy. In all he spent twenty years in Italy. When he finally decided to return to Germany, it was literature and not philosophy which he chose to teach; perhaps through German friends at Padua, he received an invitation from the Palatine Elector Friedrick I to teach the humanities at Heidelberg. Frederick, who may have sought such a teacher to help prepare students for government service, promised to pay him a small stipend. Luder accepted, and arrived at Heidelberg in the summer of 1456.

---

[42] Ritter, op. cit., 452-455; in a funeral oration for Wildenhertz delivered in 1450, he was described as the humanarum artium. . .primum expositorem; printed by Ritter, 518, 519.

[43] On Luder: Wilhelm Wattenbach, "Peter Luder," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins, XXII (1869), 33-127; "Peter Luders Lobrede auf Pfalzgraf Friedrich den Siegreichen," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins, XXIII (1871), 21-38; "Nachtragliches über Peter Luder," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins, XXVII (1875), 95-99; Gerhard Ritter, "Aus dem Kreise der Hofpoeten Pfalzgraf Friedrichs I," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins, N.F. 38 (1922), 109-123.

The notice which Luder posted to announce his courses shows he was mainly interested in improving the Latin style of his students. He related how Frederick, "desiring to restore to his school the Latin language, now almost completely turned and fallen into barbarism, has determined that the studia humanitatis, that is, the books of the poets, orators and historians, are to be publicly read."[45] For this reason, he announced he would lecture on the satires of Horace and the histories of Valerius Maximus. "Therefore," he concluded, "whoever wants to make himself more illustrious by offering work in Latin eloquence, by preparing books in the studia humanitatis and by adopting the golden knowledge of this teaching, should not think meanly of hearing these studies."[46]

---

[44] The main biographical source for Luder's life is his inaugural lecture at Heidelberg of 1456, printed by Wattenbach, "Peter Luder," 100-110.

Since Luder's name was never mentioned in any University records, it is hard to say what kind of impression his arrival made on the Heidelberg scholastics. During his five-year stay, Luder was friendly with three theologians and two or three jurists with whom he corresponded and from whom he occasionally begged money or books.[47] But there is little doubt that there were men in the arts faculty who were apprehensive about what he planned to do. In fact harassment began soon after his arrival.

---

[45] "Dominus Frydericus princeps Reni gloriosissimus, . . .senatus sui saniori usus consilio latinam linguam jam pene in barbariem versam atque perlapsam restaurare suo in gymnasio cupiens, studia humanitatis, id est poetarum, oratorum et hystoriographorum libros publice legi instituit. . . ." ibid., 99.

[46] "Quamobrem, si quis latine eloquio operam dando se clariorem efficere volet, libros studiorum humanitatis comparando, scientem doctrine commodando aurem, ea studia non contempnat," ibid.

[47] Ritter, "Aus dem Kreise, . . ." p. 99, lists Stephanus Hoest, Jodocus Aichman, Johannes Wench, Johannes Ernesti among the theologians; Johannes Wildenherz, Petrus de Wimpina, Johannes Haffner among the jurists. Ernesti had a position at the cathedral of Worms, Wildenhertz, Wimpina and Haffner divided their

Luder had intended to begin his lectures with an oration designed to introduce his listeners to humanistic studies. But he immediately ran into trouble with the arts faculty. Citing an old statute from 1406, the teachers demanded that Luder present them a copy of his speech for approval.[48] Luder complained about this to his friend Wildenhertz, the jurist, who on July 14, 1456, wrote a letter on Luder's behalf to the members of the arts faculty. Wildenhertz related that Luder felt it demeaning to give them the manuscript of his speech, since they knew "little or nothing about poetry."[49] Luder insisted that they hear the speech the next day, and if they objected to anything, he could submit it to a "neutral arbitrator." Wildenhertz also wrote that Luder had hatred and jealousy for no one and was a true friend of the arts. Moreover the poet was perplexed why "cultivators of the arts" were

---

time between lecturing and service to the Elector. His greatest patron was Matthias of Kemnat, a former student of Arriginus and the Elector's chaplain.

[48] Eduard Winckelmann, Urkundenbuch der Universität Heidelberg, 44.

[49] "Ille autem indignum putans oracionem quam in publico facere intendat, vestre privato examini submittere, cumque vobis modica aut fere nulla sit noticia poetarum, . . ." Wattenbach, "Peter Luder," 100.

trying to suppress his work, rather than elevate it. Wildenhertz concluded his letter by giving his own view:

> In short, I can truly find nothing in him not worthy of a learned man. So do what ever you like. To me however, it appears you have made known a concealed hate, or if I may speak the truth more clearly, the jealousy which secretly gnaws at you. [50]

Whether Luder submitted his speech for censorship is not certain, but he delivered it as scheduled on July 15.[51] And probably few masters found anything terribly objectionable in his oration. He made a few critical references to the "syllogistic entanglements of logic," but generally avoided any major attacks on scholastic practices. In fact at the very start he took care to praise all the various scholastic disciplines as worthy of study. But for his listeners' own use, and for the glory of their country and University, he urged them to also pursue the humanistic disciplines—history, oratory and poetry.

He devoted the rest of his speech to the praise of these studies. He began with history—"that trusty mistress of truth and instruction." He conceded that philosophy was the true "guide of living" and the ultimate repository of truth, but added that it was often too difficult and subtle to inspire good behavior and noble actions. To learn it, a person had to submit himself to the "highest possible tortures," so that "one's mind bristles and shuts itself off."[52] History had none of these drawbacks. By studying the actions of men in the past, a student painlessly learned the precepts of moral philosophy. Philosophy only affected the "cold intellect," but history inspired the emotions, so that a person not only learned truth, but also carried it out in his daily life. Quoting Cicero, Luder summarized his ideas on the value of history: "it is the witness of the times, the light of truth, the way to memory, the teacher of life and the messenger of antiquity."[53] Furthermore the study of history was pleasant. As Luder described it, it takes us to distant continents, describes far away mountains and rivers and acquaints us with the customs of other peoples. For all these reasons, he urged his listeners to study history, "so we may gain profit from it along with pleasure."[54]

---

[50] Nichil in eo denique quod non dignum sit docto viro, sentire possum. Quamobrem vos facite ut libet. Mihi tamen videmini tectum denudare odium, aut ut verius loquar invidiam vos latenter corrodentem." ibid.

[51] Ibid., 100-110.

Luder went on to praise rhetoric. Like history it was especially useful as a teacher of truth and virtue. Orators, said Luder, "are accustomed to ardently extol virtue and harshly fulminate against vice." They also teach us "to praise good deeds and detest villainy."[55] Rhetoric, he continued, was God's special gift to man. He gave the brutes only stomachs, but to man he gave speech so that truth could be propagated and men could be inspired to virtue. Furthermore, just as man stands above the beasts, so an eloquent man stands above the rest of his fellows. In other words, said Luder, everyone "except those with weak minds should want to apply himself to the works of the orators."[56]

---

[52] "Optimarum enim arcium preceptores jubent maximos cruciatus et dira pocius homini supplicia subeunda esse quam fidem vel hosti datam frangere. Ipsa quippe doctrina laudatur, sed ab re horret atque stupet animus, . . ." ibid., 104-105.

[53] ". . .testis temporum, lux veritatis, via memorie, magistra vite, nuncia vestustatis." ibid., 104.

[54] "Historias igitur, viri prestantissimi perlegere suadeo atque hortor, ut fructum inde capiamus cum jocunditate." ibid., 105.

Finally Luder urged his listeners to "thirstily imbibe" the works of poetry. Without poetry, no one, he asserted, could learn to pronounce and write words correctly or compose an eloquent speech. It not only teaches words and syllables, but "all kinds of linguistical ornaments." He conceded that some men thought poetry was unworthy since it corrupted the reader. But to Luder, the arguments of these "supposedly learned men" were "inane and filled with error." Probably these critics had never read any poetry themselves. Besides, even the Bible contained "immoral" stories: the disgrace of Sodom and

---

[55] Illi enim aut virtutes extollere ardencius aut vicia fulminare atrocius solent; hi eciam hos laudare benefacta et detestari facionora docent." ibid., 104-105.

[56] "Que cum ita sint, quis nisi mentis inops toto pectore oratoribus operam omnem atque studium impendere nolit?" ibid., 105.

Gomorrah, the incest of Lot, the love of David and Bathsheba, and others. Luder reminded these critics that "from thorns we collect roses, from mud, gold." He finally pointed out many great and learned men who had cultivated poetry: among the Greeks, Aristotle and Plato, among the Jews, Soloman and David, among Christians, Jerome, Augustine, and Lactantius.

At the end of his speech, Luder summarized his ideas. Again quoting Cicero, he concluded that the *studia humanitatis* "inspire youth, give pleasure in old age, embellish prosperity, offer escape and solace in adversity and give enjoyment at home."[57] And once more he urged "the noble and studious young men" in his audience to enthusiastically "devote their work, their labor and their industry to the humane studies." All were invited, he added, to hear his lectures when they began.

Except for the one slighting reference he made toward logic, Luder's oration made no direct criticisms of scholasticism. But implicit in all he said was the idea that scholasticism was deficient because it neglected grammatical and rhetorical studies. According to Luder, logic and philosophy were fine, but if students only studied these things, they were receiving half an education. In addition Luder argued that in some subjects humanism offered better results than scholasticism. For example, he stated that historians and orators were more effective than philosophers as teachers of ethics and good behavior.

---

[57] "Hec enim ea sunt studia, que (ut Cicero ait) adolescendiam agunt, senectutem ablectant, secundas res ornant, in adversis, profugium atque solacium prebent, delectant domo. Hiis igitur animadversis, juvenes nobilissimi, adolescentes studiosissimi (ad vos enim omnis nunc dirigitur oracio) eya age excitemini precor et totas nunc depromite vires, omnemque adunate operam, laborem, endustriam ad studia humanitatis capescenda." *ibid.*, 108

So Peter Luder began his career at the University of Heidelberg. In addition to his lectures, for which he received a small stipend, he added to his income by tutoring a small group of noble children in Latin grammar. If Luder is to be believed, there were opponents to his endeavors from the very start. Only a month after his lectures began, he complained in a letter to his friend Johannes Wenck, that there was an "innoble crowd" at Heidelberg "who had never contemplated the books of the ancients," but who had the temerity to greet his efforts with "loud laughter." He added that he had heard the whispers of those who were trying to "slander the poets and wound the divine study of letters with obscene words."[58] He still assured his correspondent, however, that if they would only come and hear his lectures, their views would change.

After a year at Heidelberg, Luder delivered another oration to preface his new lectures on Terence. He had apparently lost his regular lecture hall. In Luder's words, in order to give his speech and lectures, he had been "forced to flee" to the auditorium of the local Augustinian convent. What this "flight" signified is not certain. Luder implied that the Heidelberg professors had taken his lecture room away from him. But why did he retreat to the Augustinian convent? Were there brethren interested enough in classical literature to invite the poet to use their hall? In all likelihood this was not the case. Following the example of other convents near universities, the Augustinians regularly opened their auditorium for university lectures.

---

[58] "Hoc latet ingavum vulgus, cui nullo uncquam fuit cura antiquos illos, penes quos omnis est scientia, visere, sed escis et ventri (qui deus eorum est) inservientes cum ipsi a studiis virtutum deficiant, alios iisdem insudantes temerario ac stolide quodam cachinno deridere solent. . . . Sensi quippe nuper rumore quodam ac susurro nescio quos dum nobis detrahere conantur poetas etiamdivina litterarum studia spurcido lacerasse sermone." Ritter, "Aus dem Kreise. . .," 117.

It is evident that one year at Heidelberg had hardened some of Luder's attitudes toward scholasticism. His actual speech has been lost, but the notice he posted to announce it shows he had abandoned the moderation of his inaugural oration. He entitled the speech "on the praise of philosophy," but it turned out to be an attack on the preponderance of logic and dialectic in the medieval university. He told in his announcement how "the prince dialectic, armed with black serpents," had established a dwelling for itself and had allowed her sisters, the other liberal arts, to be "expelled from the country and to howl loudly." Then obviously referring to himself, he said that rhetoric had recently returned to claim its rights, seeking "not part of the kingdom or a palace, but only a small field and a quiet corner of the house." Nevertheless, dialectic, "stretching its neck like a hissing snake. . .sought to preserve her tyranny" by not receiving her bountiful sister and by driving her back across the Alps.[59]

The year of the speech, 1457, was a bad one for Luder, and he thought of leaving Heidelberg.[60] The attendance at Luder's lectures seems to have fallen off around this time. After his lectures on Terence, he chose Seneca as his next author. But he soon was forced to give this up. He posted a notice that since "he had terrified the minds of many" by lecturing on such a difficult author, he planned to introduce "something lighter, but no less useful to the mind." He announced he would begin lecturing on Ovid's ars amatoria—no doubt a useful book for students, though perhaps not intellectually.[61]

---

[59] Jam dudum princeps dyalectica, atris accinta serpentibus, firmissimum hic sibi domicilium constituens, sorores alias extorres esse ac exulare permisit. Nuper tamen Rhetorica, longo postliminio sororia quidem pietate illi adesse percupiens, per quendam etsi ex minimis tamen familiarem, non partem regni neque aulam, sed arvum atque domus angulum, sibi et quidem supliciter impertrare commisit. Illa tamen more suo sibilancium colla serpentum protendens, ut suam in miseros sola tirannidem infligere possit, omni pietate abjecta candens, sororem quidem floridam non modo non recipere, verum eciam ultra montes repellere conatur." Wattenbach, "Peter Luder's Lobrede. . ." 22.

[60] See the letter of Wildenhertz to the Elector, saying Luder had a number of job offers and was thinking of leaving. Wattenbach, "Peter Luder," 110.

[61] "Quoniam leccione severa L. Annei Senece gravitate et morum et sentenciarum refertissima mentes multorum perterruit ad quedam levia nec tamen mediocriter utilia animum induxit. Itaque cras hora quarta inicium P. Ovidii Nasonis libros de arte amandi dabit." ibid., 44.

He also began to lose the income from his private teaching. Along with his love of poetry, Luder had developed a taste for wine and women, and as a result, parents were reluctant to have him as a teacher for young children. Luder was forced to go begging to his friends for money, books and even clothes. By 1460 he wrote to a friend that things were going very badly; he had few listeners or pupils, and he found life in Heidelberg grim.[62] Finally when the plague closed the University in the summer of 1460, Luder left and never returned.

Luder first traveled to the south German city of Ulm, where he supported himself for a time by giving Latin lessons. But he soon gave this up, and in the summer of 1461 went to Erfurt, where he hoped he could teach at the University. Although Erfurt, like other schools, had a number of Italian-educated physicians and jurists, there were no signs of humanism in the University or city at the time Luder arrived.[63] He began his stay in Erfurt by again delivering his first Heidelberg oration, and then in the summer and fall of 1461 lectured on a number of classical authors and two of his own compositions on rhetoric and poetry. Once again there are no

---

[62] Ibid., 57.

[63] Gustav Bauch, Die Universität Erfurt im Zeitalter des Frühhumanismus, (Breslau: M.& H. Marcus, 1904); F.W. Kampschulte Die Universität Erfurt in ihrem Verhältnisse zu dem Humanismus und der Reformation 2 vols., (Trier: F. Lintz, 1858-60).

University records which mention Luder, and it is hard to tell how the Erfurt scholastics received the poet. According to one unreliable source, Luder himself, his reception was favorable. Shortly after his arrival, he wrote to his Heidelberg friend, Matthias of Kemnat, that he had been met in Erfurt not

> by the beasts, which barking at me in Heidelberg were invidiously incited with black insults in their mouths, but by lovers of the sciences and illustrious men who rejoice and are glad that I have come to them as a Mercury sent from heaven. 64

He wrote further that they had received him into the University with honor, and had given him a large room for his lectures. He added that he had many listeners and promised he would return to Heidelberg "with glory and the highest praise."

Luder's rapid departure from Erfurt suggests that his success was somewhat less spectacular than his letter to Kemnat portrayed. But when he moved to Leipzig in the winter of 1461, he did carry with him a letter of recommendation, which an Erfurt scholastic, Heinrich von Runen, had written to a friend on Luder's behalf. He called Luder a "pleasant, stable and learned man" and told how he had lectured on Ovid and Terence before "many masters and other members of the University."

---

[64] "Non michi jam res est, Mathia mi, hisce cum bestiis, qui Heidelberge in me latrantes rabida ora atris invidie venenis acuerunt, set amatoribus scienciarum viris clarissimis, qui me aliquando ad se venisse use Mercurium celitus demissum gaudent atque gloriantur." Wattenbach, "Peter Luder," 120.

He asked his friend to protect and defend him "against the bites and yelping of those dogs who fear and envy in others those things in which they feel themselves deficient."[65]

There appears to have been some interest in classical literature at Leipzig at the time of Luder's arrival. There is, at least, a collection of manuscripts from the period which contains exercises on letter-writing and a number of exerpts from classical authors.[66] Luder was, however, the first to give formal lectures on humanist subjects. He once again delivered his Heidelberg and Erfurt oration and lectured on Terence and his own book on rhetoric. His only dispute at Leipzig was not with a scholastic, but with another would-be humanist. Known only by his initials, "Jo. F.," this opponent was probably Johannes Fransisci of Parma, an Italian papal nuntio operating around Leipzig at the time. He and Luder had a typical humanist squabble over which of them wrote better Latin.[67]

Luder may not have liked the competition at Leipzig, for in 1452 he returned to Padua to again study medicine. In

---

[65] "Ideoque sit vestre dignitati ipsius probata probitas commendata, et sub alis vestre proteccionis quantum possibile fuerit, adversus caninos morsus atque latratus eorum, qui in aliis invident et metuunt, quo se vacuos esse conspiciunt, si qui plures apud vos extiterint, defensata." ibid., 121.

[66] Ibid., 64, 65.

[67] Ibid., 66, 67.

1464 he returned north to lecture for a time at the University of Basel. Later he was employed by Duke Sigismund of Austria, for whom he carried out some diplomatic missions. His last known letter dates from Basel, 1474.

Peter Luder's importance lay in the fact that he was the first person to bring humanist teaching to the universities of northern Germany. But he was not a humanist of the first rank. He had few original ideas and his prose compositions and poetry were pedestrian to say the least. Although he gained a small circle of admirers wherever he went, he failed to generate widespread interest in his humanism among the scholastic philosophers and theologians.

The University of Heidelberg, for example, made no immediate efforts to fill Luder's position after his departure. Stephen Hoest, who later studied theology, probably gave some humanist lectures in the early 1460's, although there is no record of them.[68] In 1465, however, the Elector, Frederich I, made an effort to bring in another teacher for the humanist subjects. The person he called was Petrus Antonius Finarensis, an Italian jurist who had previously taught poetry and law at Basel.[69] He must not have been happy at Basel, for while still there, he was making efforts to secure a job at Heidelberg. Specifically he tried to gain the Elector's favor by composing his De principum dignitate, a work which lavishly praised the achievements of the Palatine ruler. His efforts were successful, for on June 26, 1465 he matriculated at Heidelberg as legum doctor Basiliensis. For his lectures, the Prince promised to pay him a small stipend and appealed to the University to add to this amount. But in the fall of 1465, the University rejected the Prince's request, claiming "that the necessities of the University are too great."[70] Whether Finarensis still gave his lectures after this rebuff is not certain. More than likely he left the University and became a full-time adviser and jurist for the Elector. During the 1470's another wandering poet, Samuel of Karoch, may have taught at Heidelberg, but once again there is no documented record of his activity.

---

[68] Ritter, Die Heidelberger Universität, 461; Wimpheling, the Alsatian humanist, was a student of Hoest and later called him eloquent as Cicero and equal to Albertus Magnus, Aquinas, Plato and Avicensus. Charles Schmidt, Histoire littéraire de l'alsace, I, (Paris: Sandoz and Fischbacher, 1879), 9.

Events at Erufrt and Leipzig were similar to those at Heidelberg. A Florentine, Jacobus Publicius Rufus, taught poetry and letter-writing at Erfurt for one semester in 1467,

---

[69] Gerhard Ritter, "Petrus Antonius Finariensis, der Nachfolger Peter Luders in Heidelberg," Archiv für Kulturgeschichte XXVI (1936), 89-104.

[70] "Quia princeps supplicabat, quod universitas assignaret poete X. florenos annuos, quod gracia sua debeat pio et bono modo induci, quod desistat, quia necissitates universitatis hac tempestate tot sint et tant, quod nos vix persistere possimus." Winckelman, op. cit., II, 49.

and later taught for a slightly longer period at Leipzig. But in 1469 he moved to the University of Cracow, and in 1470 showed up in Basel.[71] Samuel of Karoch also touched down at Erfurt and Leipzig during the 1470's, but once again nothing definite can be said about his teaching.[72]

Thus early humanism had no important impact on the universities of northern Germany. The three northernmost schools, Cologne, Rostock and Greifswald, had no contact with humanism at all. At Heidelberg, Erfurt and Leipzig, the humanists appealed to small groups and often received support from the court, but the universities made no special efforts to retain them or find replacements for them after they left. Not surprisingly traditional scholastic teaching methods remained undisturbed. Logic and philosophy were the important disciplines; rhetoric and poetry were studied privately, if at all. In 1471, the two Saxon Princes, patrons of the University of Leipzig, complained to the faculty of arts about the lack of mathematics and astronomy at the school, but said nothing of the absence of humanist lectures.[73]

---

[71] Bauch, Die Universität Erfurt. . ., 58, 59.

[72] Wilhelm Wattenbach, "Samuel Karoch von Lichtenberg, ein Heidelberger Humanist," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins, XXVIII (1876), 38-51.

[73] "Wir vernehmen auch, das iczt in unser hoeuschulen keyner in der astronomei unde mathematica nünzlichen noch flisslichen lese, adder etwas practicire, das auch eine ringerunge bringet der universatit." Bruno Stübel, Urkundenbuch der

But what of the new schools of southern Germany founded after 1450—Ingolstadt, Freiburg-im-Breisgau and Tübingen? Early in their history, all three made provisions for regular lecturers in the humanist disciplines. The willingness of young institutions to try new ideas and pressure from their princely patrons were reasons for the early inclusion of humanism at these schools. For Tübingen and Freiburg, the rivalry with the nearby University of Basel, founded in 1459, was also a decisive factor. Basel had been the location of the famous Church council between 1431 and 1448, and the citizens had naturally come into contact with large numbers of Italian jurists, theologians and church officials. And once the University had been founded, Italian influence was strong in the faculties of law and medicine.[74] As a result, in 1464 the University decided to pay someone a regular salary of twenty-five guldens to lecture on poetry and rhetoric. The first three men to hold the position in succession are all familiar figures—Petrus Antonius, Peter Luder and Jacobus Publicius.[75]

Universität Leipzig von 1409 bis 1555 (Leipzig: Geisecke & Devrient, 1879), 203-204.

[74] Guido Kisch, Die Anfänge der Juristischen Fakultät der Universität Basel, 1459-1529 (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1962).

[75] Wilhelm Vischer, Geschichte der Universität Basel von 1460 bis 1529 (Basel: H. Georg, 1860), 186-190; Edgar Bonjour, Die Universität Basel (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1960), 94-107; August Rüegg, Die beiden Blütezeiten des Basler

The University of Freiburg-im-Breisgau followed the example of Basel in 1471. It decided to pay a lecturer on poetry and rhetoric a regular salary of twenty-four guldens on the condition that he accept no further fees from his students. The first teacher was an obscure Swiss, Heinrich Gundelfinger of Constance. He held the position until 1481, when he gave it up to devote his time to theology.[76] The lectures were apparently not a resounding success. The records of the University tell that he appeared before the council on May 18 to request two things: first that the University pay up the rest of his stipend, and second, that the "University may wish to alter the lectures in poetry as done this far. . .because he had few students in oratory."[77] A new teacher took over the courses in 1485, but whether he had more success than Gundelfinger is uncertain.

At Tübingen Count Eberhard of Württemberg, the patron of the new school, decided in 1481 to follow the example of Freiburg and Basel by establishing a regular salary of 30 guldens for a lecturer in oratory.[78] The historian of the

---

Humanismus (Basel: Schwabe, 1960) contains little original information.

[76] Heinrich Schreiber, Geschichte der Albert-Ludwigs Universität I, 68.

[77] "Desiderat duo, primo ut sibi stipendium integre ab Universitate persolveretur; secundo ut Universitas lectiones in Poesi huncusque factas velit commutare. . . .quod paucos habeat scholares in Oratoria, . . ." ibid., I, 69.

University, Johannes Haller, feels that the position was not regularly filled until the 1490's when Heinrich Bebel arrived. Haller's only guess as to a possible regular humanist lecturer at Tübingen prior to Bebel was a safe one: the ubiquitous Samuel of Karoch, who apparently was in the area in the early 80's.[79]

At Ingolstadt Duke Ludwig of Bavaria payed a professor to give humanist lectures for the first time in 1476. The teacher involved, Erhart Windsperger, had taken the initiative in the matter himself. In the hope of increasing the salary he already received for lecturing in the faculty of medicine, he asked the Duke for permission to give courses on the studia humanitatis. The Duke was agreeable, and directed University to increase Windsperger's salary from sixty to one hundred guldens.[80] This did not mean that a "chair of rhetoric and poetry" had been founded at Ingolstadt, as at Tübingen and Freiburg. Windsperger was only a "part-time" humanist, and his position a temporary one. The Duke made no provision for paying someone new once Windsperger decided to give up his post.

---

[78] Rudolph Roth, Urkunden zur Geschichte der Universität Tübingen (Tübingen: Laupp' schen Buchhandlung, 1877), 71.

[79] Johannes Haller, Die Anfänge der Universität Tübingen, I (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1927), 211.

[80] Gustav Bauch, Die Anfänge des Humanismus in Ingolstadt (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1901), 14,15 has printed the Duke's letter.

Thus by 1480 humanism had attained only a weak and tenuous hold on the German universities. It is symptomatic of this weakness that Rudolph Agricola, the greatest German humanist of this early period, spent only one year of his mature life at a German university and this only in an informal way. Later humanists rarely mentioned the early "poets" such as Luder and Karoch, but they never tired of lavishing praise on Agricola. Erasmus called him a "divine man" and often told how much he honored his "sacred and heavenly intellect."[81] In his Ciceronianus he praised Agricola's profound erudition and his "solid, vigorous prose . . . more flowing and lucid than Quintillian's." According to Erasmus, "he could have been the highest in Italy, but he preferred Germany."[82] Melanchthon too was a great admirer of Agricola. In an oration delivered in 1539, he told how Agricola lived at a time when "Germany spoke with the most corrupt kind of speech, and ignorance of letters was so great, that no one could guess what it was to speak correctly."[83] Yet, continued Melanchton, because of Agricola both language and philosophy had been reformed.

---

[81] Francis M. Nichols, ed., and tr., The Epistles of Erasmus (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1904), II, 165.

[82] Erasmus, "Dialogus Ciceronianus," Opera Omnia (Louvain: 1703), VIII, col. 1014.

[83] "Cum Germania corruptissimo genere sermonis uteretur, tantaque literarum inscitia esset, ut quid esset recte loqui, ne quidem suspicari nostri homines possent, imo etiam insulsitas

Often called the "father of German humanism," Agricola was actually a Hollander, born near Groningen in 1444.[84] He did, however, receive much of his early university training in Germany. He entered the University of Erfurt in 1456 at the age of twelve, received his Bachelor of Arts from Erfurt in three or four years and then went on for further studies at Cologne, Louvain, and perhaps Paris. It is possible that he had his first contact with humanism at Louvain, where a chair of rhetoric had been founded in 1443.[85] Much to the relief of his biographers, details of the humanist's life became more available in 1469, when he began to study law at the University of Pavia. His stay in Italy proved to be an intoxicating experience.[86] While still in Pavia he wrote

---

admirationem haberet, unus Rodolphus primum auribus atque animo sentire illa vitia, et desiderare meliorem orationis formam coepit." "Oratio de vita Rudolphi Agricolae," Corpus Reformatorum, VI, ed., Charles Bretschneider (Halle: C.A. Schwetschke, 1843), col. 440.

[84] William H. Woodward, Studies in Education during the Age of the Renaissance (Cambridge: University Press, 1906), 79-103; Lewis Spitz, Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 20-40; Friedrich von Bezold, Rudolph Agricola (Munich: Akademie Verlag, 1884); for those who read Dutch, Henricus van der Velden, Rodolphus Agricola een Nederlansch humanist der vijftiende eeuw (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1911).

[85] A. Polet, "Les origines et les debuts de l'humanisme à l'Université de Louvain," Les études classique, VI (1937), 28-39.

[86] The best treatment of the Italian influences on Agricola

to a friend that he had found in Italy "the holiest, greatest and most serious men of genius;" he would not praise things too much, however, for fear his friend would not believe what he wrote.[87] He soon abandoned law to devote himself to humanistic studies. He moved to Ferrara, and his experience there was especially important for his intellectual development. He attended lectures at the University and became acquainted with Battista Guarino and Ludovico Carbone, the two men who had taken over the school of Guarino of Verona after that famous humanist's death. Agricola made himself a living example of the Renaissance "universal man." He devoted himself to gymnastics, took up painting, sculpture and music and even built an organ for the Este Dukes of Ferrara. He learned Greek, read widely in classical and humanist literature and translated a number of Greek works into Latin. His virtuosity impressed even the Italians. He was asked to deliver several orations at the University and Este court, a great honor for a "barbarian northerner."

Agricola returned home in 1479 and held a number of informal positions until 1482, when his friend Johann of Dalberg, Bishop of Worms, convinced him to accept the patronage

---

is Cesare Vasoli, "Dialettica e Rhetorica in Rodolpho Agricola," Accademia toscanna di scienze e lettere la Columbaria, Attie Memmorie, XXII (1957), 305-355.

[87] Karl Hartfelder, "Unedierte Breife von Rudolph Agricola." Festschrift der Badischen Gymnasien (Karlsruhe: Hofbuchdruckeri, 1886), 12.

of Elector Phillip of the Palatinate. He lived with the Bishop and had complete freedom to do what he wished. He occasionally traveled to Heidelberg where he gave informal lectures on physics, astronomy, Aristotle's De animalibus and Pliny. Although he never held a formal teaching position at Heidelberg or anywhere else, he had pondered the problems and difficiencies of northern scholastic education ever since his stay in Italy. In letters to friends he criticized "the rude, stinking filth of the schools in our country,"[88] and complained that the Heidelberg students and masters who heard his lectures had "to lay out all the time of day in their sophistries over the most petty and as it were superfluous questions."[89]

In 1484, Agricola wrote down his general ideas on needed educational reform in a letter to a friend Jacobus Barbarinus, later published under the title, De ratione studio.[90] He immediately warned his correspondent that what the professors taught in the schools was not true learning.

---

[88] Rodolphi Agricolae Lucubrationes, ed., Alard (Cologne: John Gymnich, 1539), II, 177.

[89] "maxima pars magistri sunt aut scholastici (ut dicimus artium) quibus necesse est omne tempus illis suis cavillationibus impendere angustistimum & velut subsicium diei fragmentum quoddam, in haec studia patet illis. . . ." Rodolphi Agricolae Opuscula, ed., Peter Gilles (Louvain: Th. Martens, 1511), e. iiii.

[90] Gilles first printed the letter in his 1511 edition of the Opuscula; I have used a copy printed by Johannes Rivius, Libellus de ratione docendi (Freiburg: 153?), 79-90.

> They claim for themselves these babblings, these clatterings in inane noises which we now popularly call the arts and wear away the day in their perplex obscurities and (if I may speak more truthfully) enigmas of disputations which for so many centuries have found no Oedipus who could solve them. . . . 91

They force these things on young boys, he complained, and snuff out "the better hope and fruit of natural talents."

The alternative plan he outlined for Barbarinus shows the influence of Guarino of Verona's educational theories. Agricola urged his disciple to devote himself to philosophy, though not the traditional philosophy of the schools. Most important, he felt, was the study of moral philosophy. He recommended Aristotle, along with Cicero and Seneca, and like Luder, stressed the usefulness of reading orators, poets and historians, who painlessly taught the precepts of philosophy. Most valuable of all, however, was constant involvement with the Bible, which like no other book, "has for a long time been free of all error."[92]

Although the Italian impact is manifest in all that Agricola wrote, some of his ideas have their source in his early scholastic training at Erfurt, Cologne and Paris. This training probably explains Agricola's interest in natural

---

[91] ". . .plerique etiam loquaces has, et inani stripitu crepitantes, quas vulgo artes jam vocamus, sibi vindicant, et perplexis disputationum ambagibus, vel etiam (ut verius dicam) enigmatibus diem terunt, quae tot jam saeculis nullum invenerunt Oedipodem, qui ea solveret, . . ." ibid., 77.

[92] Ibid., 79.

philosophy, a subject few Italian humanists pursued with any great alacrity. In his letter to Barbarinus, Agricola stressed the importance of learning "the nature of things." A student should learn:

> the positions of lands, seas, mountains and rivers, the nature of the earth's peoples, their customs, borders, circumstances, and their powers, either received or extended; also the qualities of trees and plants, treated by Theophrastus, and the history, reproduction and parts of animals, treated by Aristotle. 93

Such studies were less important than moral philosophy, but still offered "respectability and pleasure by adding ornament to the mind." For all his dependence on Italian models, Agricola may have owed a few intellectual debts to men like Albertus Magnus, whose writings he must have studied at Cologne.

When Agricola came to talk of eloquence, the Italian influence surfaced again: without good style, all knowledge was useless. He wrote Barbarinus that something must be done to improve "that corrupt instruction in speaking which we now receive in the schools." He advised him to "be suspect of everything you have learned till now. . .and reject everything except the testimony of the best authors."[94]

---

[93] "jam terrarum, marium montium, fluviorum situs, naturas gentiumque in his mores, terminos, conditionem, imperia vel accepta vel prolata, jam arborum herbarumque vires, quas Theophrastus, jam animantium historium, generationem, partes quas Aristoteles literis mandavit. . . ." ibid., 80.

[94] "Quod tamen ad corruptam institutionem loquendi emendandam

As Agricola outlined it, there were three stages in the acquisition of an adequate style. First, there was a need for diligent reading of the best authors. Agricola urged his disciple not to concentrate on content alone, but to carefully observe the force and structure of sentences, the choice of words and the methods for explaining difficult themes. Second, eloquence demanded the cultivation of a good memory. This was essential to diplomats, councillors and princes, who often had to deliver impromptu speeches. He felt Quintillian was the best guide in the development of this faculty. Finally, Agricola recommended long hours of practice in composition and writing. He advised Barbarinus to learn clever and wise things to say on topics which arise in daily conversation, such as ignorance, life, teaching and virtue. For example, when discussing virtue, everyone would think him learned if he could tell the story of Lucretia, who "preferred death rather than a life of sin." He also recommended that Barbarinus "sweat through" the dialectical topics, which offered the speaker a resevoir of things to say on a wide variety of subjects. Once he mastered these, he would be like those "old professors of arts which the Greeks

---

pertinet, quam pueri in scholis accipimus, huius mihi admonendus videris; fac suspectum tibi sit quiquid hactenus didcisti, damnes omnia. . .nisi meliorum autorum testimonio. . ." ibid., 81.

called the sophists," who could discourse on any matter.[95]

Agricola's letter to Barbarinus was a short and relatively superifcial work on education, which could have been written by any number of humanists before or after him. Much more important for the later impact of humanism on scholastic methodology was his *De inventione dialectica*, perhaps the most influential work by any German humanist.[96] For Agricola's humanist contemporaries and for many of the later humanists, reform of scholasticism meant little more than tacking some rhetoric and poetry onto the scholastic superstructure, largely constructed of logic and dialectic. It was Agricola's significant achievement to attempt a reform of logic itself.

As Agricola clearly stated it in his book, the "preposterous logic" taught in the schools was responsible for most of the intellectual deficiencies of his day. It failed to establish the methodological groundwork for the other disciplines. "It is certain," wrote Agricola, "that this truly miserable and quibbling uneasiness of speech which is taught, not only is useless to learning the other arts, but is also prejudicial to many of them."[97] As a result, lawyers "stutter in their confused and involved disputing; the study of medicine has been reduced to physics; mathematics has disappeared." But worst of all, faulty dialectic had destroyed theology. Agricola complained that once metaphysics, logic and physics were removed from theological discourse, there was really nothing left. Theologians should be instructing the people in religion, justice and virtue; instead "they strike the ear of the listeners with foolish noise."[98]

---

[95] *Ibid.*, 88.

[96] Vasoli, *op. cit.*, ; August Faust, "Die Dialektik Rodolph Agricolas," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, N.F., XXXIV (1922), 118-136; Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue*, 92-130. There are many editions; I have used *De inventione dialectica libritres, cum scholiis Johannis Mattaei Phrissemii* (Paris: Simon Colinaeus, 1538).

Agricola's Dialectical Invention has been called anti-Aristotelian, though with little justification. Although he did criticize the obscurities of Aristotle's style and organization, Agricola never evinced the bitter anti-Aristotelianism of Valla in his Dialectical Disputations. Actually more than anything else Agricola was rebelling against a perversion of Aristotle by the medieval logicians. Aristotle had divided all human discourse into three areas—logic, dialectic and rhetoric. Logic dealt with certainties and had as its goal rigid scientific demonstration. Dialectic, however, dealt only with probabilities and probable conclusions. As Aristotle put it, dialectic was that branch of discourse "which reasons from opinions generally accepted." Rhetoric also dealt with probabilities, but differed from dialectic in its application, which was persuasion rather than demonstration. To put it another way, logic began with a question and moved from a strict argument to a strict conclusion; dialectic and rhetoric moved from a probable argument to a probable conclusion—the best that could be hoped for in most practical situations. Some early scholastics such as Aquinas and Albertus Magnus retained these distinctions, but most medieval logicians dropped them entirely. Rhetoric was pushed aside, and dialectic, the art of probable discourse, was adsorbed to logic. Dialectic and logic came to mean the same thing—the art of rigid scientific demonstration.[99] As such, logic or dialectic became more useful for the scholastic master and student who needed a powerful tool to defend debatable points in the heat of disputation.

---

[97] "Istam vero miseram & cavillosam loquendi solicitudinem, quam tu doces, certum est, non modo reliquis artibus discendis non prodesse, sed etiam obesse plurimum." De inventione. . . Bk II, Ch. I, p. 151.

[98] "sic jurisconsulti, perplexa & involuta disputandi praecepta balbutiunt. Sic medicinae studia magna ex parte redacta sunt ad supervacuas instituto suo physices, questiones, Sic physice mathematicas arripuit. . .De theologia vero quod dicere opportet? cui si metaphysicen, si physicen, si dialecticen hodie demas, nudam pono & destitutam, & quae nomen suum tueri nequeat, reddas. Ergo cum docendus erit populua, & ad religionem, justitiam, continentiam adhortandus ex illis artibus inextricabilis aliqua eruitur disputatio. . .inani stripitu audientium feriat aures." ibid., 150.

Agricola tried to reform logic by again shifting the balance between Aristotle's three forms of discourse. He neglected the logic of rigid demonstration, and expanded the field of dialectic to cover all of human discourse in its rational and emotional elements. It became the "art of discussing with probability any proposed matter in so far as the nature of the subject is capable of creating conviction."[100] Its goal was to teach and convince the reader or listener. It therefore assumed many of the responsibilities traditionally ascribed to rhetoric. Rhetoric no longer dealt with finding arguments and organization, but only with final delivery, or "elocution."

---

[99] Ong, op. cit., 59-63; Wilbur S. Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700 (Princeton: University Press, 1956).

Dialectic thus became less useful for the professional scholastic bent on rigid demonstration of his theses. And this is exactly as Agricola intended. He justifiably felt that the dialectic taught in the schools was impractical for everyone except those intending to be university teachers. It was worthless for anyone entering a non-academic profession. Agricola stated these ideas at the beginning of his book. His dialectic would not only lay the groundwork for study of other disciplines, but it could also be used by people in their everyday lives. It was designed for those "who govern the republic in council, for whom it is fitting to make conviction in the senate or to the people on war, peace and the other affairs of state, . . .also for those who have as a profession to accuse, defend, petition and deny before judges, and for those who may want to teach the people justice, religion, and piety."[101] These things, he continues, were rarely taught in the schools, and when they were, in an incomprehensible way.

---

[100] "Erit ergo nobis hoc pacto definita dialectice, ars probabiliter de qualibet re proposita disserendi, prout cuiusque natura capax esse poterit." De inventione, Bk. II, Ch. 3, p. 163.

Agricola had planned to treat dialectic in two separate books. The first, on invention, dealt with methods by which debatable prepositions could be analyzed to determine what could be said for and against them. The second, which he never completed, was to deal with judgement—methods of arranging words into propositions, propositions into syllogisms, and syllogisms into whole discourses. The key to dialectical invention was skill in the use of loci, usually translated "topics" or "common places." Topics were headings or key notions used to find out what was available in one's store of knowledge for discourse on any given subject. Lists of topics normally included things such as definition, genus, species, wholes, parts, relatives, opposites, place, time and so on, up to twenty-four in Agricola's case. These were the headings to run through when one had something to say on any given subject—while pleading a case in court, giving a lecture or debating a point of philosophy.

---

[101] ". . .qui consilio rempublicam gubernaut, quos de pace, bello, caeterisque civitatis negotius, . . .saipe senatui, saipe populo fidem facere oportet, quique in judiciis itam accusare, defendere, petere abnuere, quique populum docere justitiam, religionem, peitatem, in professo habent." ibid., Bk, I, Ch. I, p. 3.

There is no need to go into Agricola's definitions of the various loci and his rules for using them. What is important is that Agricola upset the medieval dialectical tradition by tying it to the precepts of classical rhetoric. Cicero and Quintillian were the great sources for his work and the influence of Valla is evident throughout. The very concept of "invention" had in fact traditionally been used by orators rather than logicians; Cicero, for example, named invention the first of five parts of rhetoric. "Topics" too had always been of interest mainly to orators; if properly used they enabled the speaker to fulfill his role of being able to discourse fluently on any subject.

Agricola's ideas were too advanced for the Germany and France of the late fifteenth century. For men trained on Peter of Spain and with knowledge of rhetoric rarely encountered, Agricola's logic must have seemed like no logic at all. Dialectical Invention remained in manuscript for more than thirty-five years after its completion, and appeared in print only in 1515 in an edition produced by the French humanist, Jacques Lefèvre. Once northern scholars had received more exposure to humanism, Agricola's work attained enormous popularity. By the time the sixteenth century was over, more than fifty editions had been printed.[102] More important, Peter Ramus and Phillip Melanchthon, the two great pedagogical theorists of the sixteenth century, adopted Agricola's ideas and spread them through the schools and universities of France and Germany. If Agricola was the father of German humanism, then his first children only began appearing forty years after his death.

By 1480 the humanists had presented their ideas to most of the universities within the Empire. Except for Agricola's work on dialectic, their program was a simple one—the introduction of classical orators, poets and historians. Their criticisms of scholasticism were mild; in most cases they focused on the scholastic's one-sided interest in dialectic and their lack of eloquence. The example of Konrad Säldner shows that some scholastics had misgivings about the new literary studies, but in general the humanists seem to have been greeted with indifference. Three universities established salaries for lecturers in the *studia humanitatis*, but no one thought of making humanist courses required for a degree. The poor reception of Agricola's work on dialectic is evidence that before 1480 humanism had done little to change the scholastic patterns of thought which had always dominated the German universities.

---

[102] Walter J. Ong, *Ramus and Talon Inventory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 534-558 has found fifty-three copies between 1515 and 1589; he admits his list is not exhaustive "and can doubtless be enlarged."

CHAPTER III

FROM GRAMMAR REFORM TO PLATONIC REVIVAL, 1480-1500

For many of the German humanists between 1480 and 1500, attacks on scholasticism meant little more than derision of the Doctrinale and other medieval grammars used in the northern European schools and universities. They were following the example of the Italian humanists, whose earlier dissatisfactions had already produced a mass of new teaching material for Latin grammar. Their goal was to rid the German schools of the speculative, dialectical approach to grammar, and firmly bind instruction in Latin with the study of classical literature.

The first author in the Empire to compose a reformed Latin grammar was Bernard Perger, the most influential figure in Viennese humanism during the period from Peuerbach's death in 1459 until the arrival of Celtis in 1497.[1] He had begun his university training at Vienna in 1459 and later studied both medicine and law, without gaining a degree in either discipline. After a trip to Italy, he returned to Vienna in the 1470's, where he lectured at the University on Vergil and

---

[1] "Bernard Perger," Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, XXV (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1887), 374, 375.

Sallust and served as rector for the preparatory school at St. Stephan's Cathedral. Later he carried out a number of diplomatic missions for the Emperor. As rector of the school and as an instructor at the University, Perger became interested in the reform of grammar teaching. He began work on a manual for Latin instruction during the 1470's and published it in 1482 in Padua, perhaps on one of his diplomatic missions. Known as the *Nova grammatica*, the work was largely based on an earlier grammar written by the Italian humanist Nicholas Perotti.[2]

As Perger explained in the introduction, his teaching experience had taught him how grammar students were led "through long ambiguities and certain methods more subtle than useful."[3] He complained that from the very beginning, the study of grammar offered no respite from the complicated logical explanations which previous writers had included in their commentaries on Alexander Villedieu. To Perger this was especially harmful, since the sounder grammars of Donatus and Priscian had fallen into complete disuse. To remedy the situation, Perger explained that he had compiled a small book on the basic grammatical rules, without trying to involve his reader in questions more suitable for a logician. He acknowledged his debt to Perotti and admitted that he himself had only removed the difficult passages and added a few explanations in German. Finally Perger assured the reader that his book was worthy of intensive study: the student could reach the "peak of grammar" without weighing down his mind with "the unclear and doubtful explanations of Alexander's awkward verse."[4]

---

[2] Perger openly admitted his debt to Perotti in the full title of his work: *Artis grammaticae introductiorum in octo partes orationes, in constructiones, in epistolas conficiendas fere ex Nicolae Peroti grammatici eruditisimi traditionibus a magistro Perger translatum*. Ludwig Hain, *Repertorium Bibliographicum*, II, part II (Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta, 1838), 59. The work which Perger used was almost certainly Perotti's *Rudimenta grammatices*, first published in Italy in 1468; although one of the most popular humanist grammars, it did not appear in Germany until the turn of the century when Quentel, a publisher at Cologne, printed an edition. Wolfgang Panzer, *Annales Typographici*, XI (Nuremberg: Eberhard, 1803), 27.

[3] ". . .per longas ambages et modos quosdam magis subtiles quam utiles, . . ." *Nova grammatica*, A i. I have examined the Basel edition, printed by Nicolaus Lamparter in 1506.

In the text of his book, Perger treated the usual grammatical topics: etymology, syntax and accent along with a few rules for letter writing and versification. As the first work of its kind written for Germans, it proved to be popular. There were at least eighteen editions published in the fifteenth century[5] and several more in the early years of the sixteenth.[6] Most of these editions were published at Vienna, but others appeared at Nuremberg, Strasburg, Basel and two small southwest German towns, Reutlingen and Memmingen. These publication facts suggest that local schoolmasters found the book more interesting than university professors.

---

[4] "Nec multis ambagibus aut versuum intricatorum variis et dubiis expositionibus ingenia vestra obtundentur." ibid., A ii.

[5] Hain, op. cit., 59-62.

[6] Panzer, op. cit., 26.

Later in the period a number of other writers followed the path laid down by Perger. Most prolific among these men was Paul Niavis.[7] He received his Master of Arts degree at Leipzig in 1482 and taught school at Halle and Chemnitz in the 1480's; later he became a city scribe in Zittau and Bautzen. He wrote a number of works on grammar and the related subjects of rhetoric and letter writing, but his most popular book was his Latina ideomata, published under various titles over twenty times in the fifteenth century.[8] The book was a short collection of dialogues on travel, amusing situations and other events which the teacher was to give to his students as instructional aids.[9] The most interesting dialogue, staged between Florian and Arnolph, dealt with the merits of traditional scholastic grammar instruction. Florian, who surely represented Niavis's viewpoint, mocked Arnolph's difficulties with Latin and told him he was not studying true grammar at all. Perplexed, Arnolph asked if Alexander Villedieu, Eberhard of Bethune and the modi significandi were not the best guides for Latin studies. Florian countered that he knew "no books which more ruined a student's mind." These works, he continued, were not meant for beginning students, but were more fitting for a thirty-year old, who had studied dialectic, physics, philosophy and perhaps medicine and law. He went on to recommend the new Italian grammars, in which a student could quickly learn the rules and could proceed right away to the classics. At first Arnolph did not agree: "Does not a student have to know the parts of Alexander, the variation of cases and tenses and the properties of the modes of signification" before progressing to the higher stages of learning? Florian retorted that a learned man had no need for such frivolous rules and warned that if Arnolph continued in his ways, in another twenty years all he would know was a few Latin prayers, Donatus and the parts of Alexander. Finally his friend was convinced, and he cursed his old teachers.

---

[7] A. Bömer, Die lateinische Schülergesprache der Humanisten (Berlin: Hanwitz, 1897), 19-55; "Paul Niavis" Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte, XI (1892), 51-94.

[8] Also to his credit, Epistolae breves, Thesaurus eloquentiae, Colores rhetoricae disciplinae, Epistolae mediocres, Epistolae longiores. Hain, op. cit., II, 481-485.

[9] Printed by Bömer, Die lateinische Schülergesprache. . ., 19-55.

A similar work in theme and organization was the Apology for the Seven Liberal Arts[10] written by a young humanist from western Germany in 1494. The author, Dietrich Gresemund, was born in 1475, studied in Italy, and was acquainted with many of the Rhineland humanists. He held a number of ecclesiastical positions in Mainz before his death in 1512.[11] As far as can be determined, he never taught at the University of Mainz, or anywhere else. Like Niavis's composition, Gresemund's work was written in dialogue form and attacked the medieval grammarians. The usual arguments were set forth again. Alexander and the modi significandi were so difficult that only a philosopher could understand them; they only confused and discouraged young students. According to Gresemund, the teachers were to blame, since they continued to ignore the more suitable grammars written by the Italians. When a student finally attained his Master of Arts degree, he knew the first and second parts of Alexander but nothing of real importance:

---

[10] Theoderici Gresemundi iunioris Moguntini lucubraciuncule bonarum septem artium liberalium Apologiam eiusdemque cum philosophia dialogum et orationem ad rerum publicarum rectores in se complectentes (Mainz: 1494).

> They do not know how to speak Latin, compose poetry, draw up letters, and relate histories, nor how to express themselves on the secrets of nature and morality, simply because they have given their lives to the modi significandi, the quiddity of nouns, confused universals and the other frivolities of that kind. 12

In short, wrote Gresemund, these grammar books were truly the work of the devil.

---

[11] "Dietrich G. Gresemundt," Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, IX (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1879), 640, 641.

[12] Cited by Gustav Bauch, "Aus der Geschichte des Mainzer Humanismus," Archiv für hessische Geschichte und Altertumskunde, N.F. V (1907), 22.

Of all the grammar reformers of the 1480's and 90's, the best known was the pious Alsatian humanist, Jacob Wimpheling.[13] He is particularly interesting for the history of humanism and scholasticism in the late fifteenth century. More clearly than anyone else, he shows the possibilities of having a commitment to certain humanist ideas, while retaining a deep respect for scholastic philosophy and theology. A priest and licentiate in theology, Wimpheling looked on humanism as a good method for improving grammatical instruction. But when the younger humanists of the early sixteenth century went farther in their attacks on tradition, Wimpheling would strongly oppose what he considered their dangerous radicalism.

A brief look at Wimpheling's biography points up two reasons for his tenuous adaptation of humanist ideas. First, he never traveled in Italy and received all his training at northern European universities. Where he became acquainted with humanism is not certain. He first attended a school in his hometown of Schledtstadt. Louis Dringenberg, his teacher, was a graduate of the Deventer school run by the Brethren of the Common Life, and no doubt imparted to his pupils some of the deep and practical piety of the Devotio moderna. But he probably taught them nothing about classical letters, for he had been at Deventer before the humanist reforms of Alexander Hegius. Wimpheling might have encountered humanism in 1464, when he began his university studies at Freiburg-im-Breisgau. Although the school's regular chair of oratory was established only in 1471, after Wimpheling's departure, there were a few masters at the University with some interest in the new humanist currents. While still a student, Wimpheling even tried his hand at poetry and wrote some carmina amatoria, which fortunately for his contemporary reputation as a stern moralist, were not discovered until the nineteenth century.[14] After having received his Bachelor of Arts in 1466, Wimpheling cut short his further studies at Freiburg in 1469, due to the plague. He tried to resume them the next year at Erfurt, but was called home after a few months to attend his sick guardian uncle.

---

[13] Charles Schmidt, Histoire littéraire de L'Alsace, I (Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1879), 1-10; Joseph Knepper, Jakob Wimpheling (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1902); Lewis Spitz, "Jakob Wimpheling-Sacerdotal Humanist," Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, 41-60; Hugo Holstein, "Zur Biographie Jakob Wimphelings," Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Litteraturgeschichte, N.F. 4 (1891), 227-252.

Wimpheling completed his formal scholastic education at Heidelberg.[15] He received his Master of Arts in 1471, and then after sampling law for two years, took up theology, which he pursued until 1482, when he received his licenciate. He became a close friend of Matthias of Kemnat, the Elector's chaplain, and also of Johannes von Dalberg, the Bishop of Worms. Kemnat, who had been Peter Luder's patron, and Dalberg, whose inclination toward humanism has been mentioned, both encouraged Wimpheling's literary interests. He dabbled in poetry[16] and even collected a small book on metrification which he probably taught in one of the Burses.[17]

---

[14] Schmidt, op. cit., 6.

[15] Gustav Knod, "Wimpheling und die Universität Heidelberg," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins, N.F. I (1886), 317-335.

Besides his long scholastic training, Wimpheling's deep Catholic piety also helps explain his reservations about humanism. If Wimpheling can be believed, an event during his brief stay at Erfurt had the greatest bearing on his religious development: one day he saw the words noli peccare, deus videt written on an Erfurt church; this ominous warning, he claims, made such an impression that he immediately gave up his frivolous habits and devoted himself entirely to God.[18] In all likelihood his early training with the Brethren of the Common Life played a more important role than this single event. Whatever the case, he was a devout Catholic interested in improving Church practices. His piety expressed itself in a kind of prudish anxiety about morality and good behavior. He was adept at spotting shortcomings in others and had no compunction about pointing them out to any person he considered in need of correction.[19] Because of his moral earnestness, he never shook the fear that classical literature was potentially dangerous for young and pious ears.

---

[16] Two of his poems have been included in the nineteenth century edition of Kemnat's Chronicle of Frederich I, Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen und deutschen Geschichte, II (1862), 74-138.

[17] Knepper, op. cit., 27.

[18] Schmidt, op. cit., 7.

Wimpheling's literary activity at Heidelberg between 1471 and 1482 shows only a mild interest in humanism. As previously mentioned, he did write verses and compose a small book on poetry. In 1480 he even wrote a play which his pupils performed during the graduation ceremonies for some students in the *via moderna*.[20] *Stylpho*, as Wimpheling titled it, was modeled on Terence, and contained some quotes from Ovid; but its content was far from the spirit of classical antiquity. Stylpho wanted to become a priest, but because of laziness he ends up as a pig herder.[21]

---

[19] See, for example, his letter of June 17, 1500 "To a certain teacher of boys and young men, miserably taken by a most shameful love of prostitute and because of it scandalizing his scholars more than moderately." Gustav Knod, "Neun Briefe von und an Jacob Wimpheling," *Vierteljahrsschrift für Kultur und Litterature der Renaissance*, I (1886), 231, 232.

[20] Hugo Holstein, ed., "Jacobus Wimphelingius Stylpho," *Lateinische Litteraturdenkmäler des XV. und XVI. Jahrhunderts*, VI (1892), 1-16 is the only modern edition.

[21] In scene V the mayor of his city tells him, "Quantum . . .intellegere possum, aptior es, Stylpho, ut porcos quam homines pascas." *ibid*., 13.

Wimpheling's cursory interest in humanism did not lead him to question traditional scholastic methods. In 1477, for example, he delivered an oration to celebrate the graduation of a certain Ulrichus de Rotvilla.[22] As in Stylpho, Wimpheling showed his acquaintance with classical letters by including verses from Vergil and Horace. But the theme of the speech was again traditional and conservative. He praised the graduate for his diligence and urged him to continue his pursuit of knowledge. He also extolled the disciplines in which Ulrich had proved his competence. He praised grammar first as the most basic of all school subjects and told his audience no one could spend too much time learning the rules of the Latin language. "Here is the source, root and origin of the Latin tongue, here the signification of words is learned, here the arrangement and pronunciation of words is held in the mind." Rhetoric was not even mentioned, but dialectic was highly recommended as offering "extraordinary pleasure." Without it, said Wimpheling, no debatable proposition could ever be resolved. Finally Wimpheling briefly spoke of philosophy, in his view, the most difficult and most rewarding discipline. Some people, he pointed out, shrunk back from its study because of its demands, but "they are donkeys, and will remain donkeys."

---

[22] Printed by Knod, "Wimpheling und die Universität Heidelberg," 325-328.

Nowhere in the speech was there any hint of dissatisfaction with Heidelberg's academic status quo.

As deacon of the arts faculty in 1479, Wimpheling had another opportunity to deliver a graduation speech, this time for a group of eleven students receiving their Master of Arts. He again praised the students' hard work, and then went on to praise philosophy with great enthusiasm. He told his listeners,

> Philosophy is the only ship that carries us to God, its study makes us acceptable to our creator. It gives us immortality, it makes us happy, it separates us from the unreasoning beasts and keeps us from the ignorant crowd. Whoever despises philosophy is not capable of becoming enthusiastic about anything, for if he wants mental pleasure and spiritual calm, if he seeks to yearn for God and eternal life, if he he seeks to attain earthly happiness, all these things philosophy can give him with its gushing source of truth; but without it he can attain none of these things. 23

He went on to praise Aristotle as the great source of philosophic wisdom, and said that a thorough knowledge of his writing was the prerequisite for achievement in theology, medicine and even law. As can be seen, Wimpheling in the 1470's had little in common with the humanist ideal of a literary education based on poetry, oratory and history.

After receiving his Bachelor of Theology in 1482, Wimpheling left academic life and accepted a position as preacher

---

[23] Cited by Knepper, op. cit., 31, 32.

at the Cathedral of Speyer. Little is known about the fourteen years Wimpheling spent there, but they were undoubtedly quiet years with time for reading, meditation and study. While he was at Speyer, his commitment to humanism intensified. Wimpheling never abandoned the idea that a sound education for laymen and clergy was a necessity for personal and religious improvement. And during the 1480's and 90's he concluded that certain humanist ideas on the teaching and writing of Latin offered valuable alternatives to traditional scholastic methods.

During the final decade of the century, therefore, Wimpheling composed a number of manuals and guides on the Latin language. The first such composition was his *Elegantiarum medulla*—"The Kernel of Elegancies"—of 1493, a slim book on Latin style.[24] In the introductory letter, the author expressed the hope that German students could learn to write Latin skilfully as had the Italians. The book contained a few stylistic rules and a long list of "elegant Latin phrases," arranged in alphabetical order. His source for the rules and almost all the phrases was Lorenzo Valla's *Elegantiae linguae latinae*. Wimpheling readily admitted his dependence, often citing the chapter and page where he had borrowed from the

---

[24] *Jacobi Wimphelingi Slettstattensis Elegantiarum medulla: oratioriaque precepta*. *In ordinem inventum facilem, copiose, clare, breviterque reducta*. (Speyer, 1493).

Italian humanist.[25] A few years later he compiled a similar though somewhat larger work, the Elegantiae majores. The books attained a modicum of popularity, both being published a dozen times before 1520.[26]

Another book from the period, however, offers a clearer picture of Wimpheling's mind in the 1490's. This was his Isodoneus Germanicus of 1497, an extensive guidebook written for teachers of young men and boys.[27] In the introduction Wimpheling expressed his faith in the beneficial results of a good education. He wrote:

> The true fundament of our religion, the condition of every honest life, the honor of each state, the prosperity of the republic, the knowledge of Holy Scripture and good doctrines, the victory over the passions all depend entirely on the direction from their youngest age. 28

He expressed the opinion that German boys were well-endowed with talents, but that they lacked teachers who knew proper methods for instruction. The teachers said and wrote many things, he continued, but students found only a "few good kernels in the midst of all the chaff." Therefore, Wimpheling concluded, he had composed his Isodoneus, a book for those teachers who wanted to improve their instruction, especially in the field of Latin grammar.

---

[25] Ibid., Dv, Dvi.

[26] Schmidt, op. cit., II, 319.

[27] I have used the German translation by Joseph Freundgen, Jakob Wimphelings pädagogische Schriften (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1898), 81-179.

[28] Ibid., 82.

Wimpheling's attention to grammar instruction was typical of the older generation of German humanists. Wimpheling's concern, however, had a special religious urgency absent in most of his contemporaries. For Wimpheling, poor training in grammar was disastrous, for it meant inaccessibility to the Scriptures and other religious writing. Without sound Latin, a priest would bumble through the Mass, and laymen would have no protection against the "spirits of Hell and the enticements of the flesh."[29] His answer to the problem, again typical, was an adoption of methods used by the "clever Italians." Their methods, wrote Wimpheling, were efficient and effective:

> Thus the sons of the Italians soon attain the capability to hear lectures on Roman law, canon law, and Holy Scripture, and they enter easily into a career as lawyer in a time of their life when my pitiable countrymen still quibble among themselves about the vocative, the figures of speech and apposition. . . .[30]

Wimpheling's version of Italian grammar methods comprises the bulk of his Isodoneus.

An illuminating aspect of the Isodoneus is the attitude of Wimpheling on the books to be used for grammar instruction. He rejected most of the medieval grammars, and blamed the

---

[29] Ibid., 83.

[30] Ibid., 113.

German printers for continuing their publication simply because they sold well.[31] There were parts of Alexander's Doctrinale of which he approved, however. He felt the book was valuable in specific areas, such as the section on parts of speech and case endings. But Alexander's treatment of syntax was worthless and his "discussions of logical relationships appear to be beyond the mind of the student and lead him into a dark labyrynth."[32] For similar reasons, certain complex commentaries on Donatus should be avoided. Accoring to Wimpheling, the students should abandon these manuals after learning the basic rules and move on to the works of the better authors. Among these writers, Valla took first place. In Wimpheling's words, "with the energy of a bee he has compiled many quotations, which for correct speech, elegance of expression and style appear necessary and useful."[33] Also on Wimpheling's approved list were Priscian, Perotti and Francesco Nigri.

The acquisition of elegance, according to Wimpheling, demanded a thorough study of the Roman poets and orators. He felt compelled to spend several pages defending the usefulness of poetry, and assembled the usual list of Church fathers,

---

[31] Ibid., 111.

[32] Ibid., 100.

[33] Ibid., 103.

Popes, Saints and scholastics (Aquinas and Gerson) who in his opinion, had seen no conflict between poetry and Christianity. But while defending poetry in general, he found fault with individual poets. The works of Virgil and Lucan and everything but the Odes of Horace were acceptable. On the other hand Juvenal (too lewd), Persius (too difficult), Ovid (too effeminate and obscene) and Martial (too corrupting) were all to be avoided, as were Tibullus, Propertius, Catullus and Sappho (all too shameless).[34] The comic poets, Terence or Plautus, were safe, although Wimpheling advised the teacher to avoid the plays they wrote on love. He considered the orators a less dangerous group. Cicero, Sallust, Valerius Maximus, Seneca, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, Petrarch, Bruni and Francesco Philelpho all received his stamp of approval.[35] Safest of all were the Christian poets—old ones such as Prudentius and Sedulus, and modern ones such as Baptista Mantuanus. Wimpheling could think of nothing more pleasing than if people spent their time on these authors and rejected the other "morally worthless poets." Furthermore, wrote Wimpheling, Germans should shun the example of

> . . .certain highly learned Italians who find pagan fables more pleasing than Christian stories, the affairs and practices of heathens more pleasing than of Christians, the names and deeds of the gods and

---

[34] *Ibid.*, 141, 142.

[35] *Ibid.*, 144, 145.

> goddesses more pleasing than the acts of Christ and the Holy Virgin, impurity more pleasing than blamelessness, sensual love more pleasing than Christian love. [36]

After a number of suggestions to teachers on personal deportment, Wimpheling brought the Isodoneus to a close. The work clearly shows the conlfict in Wimpheling's thought. On the one hand it shows him as the humanist reformer who envisioned a great improvement in German education; on the other hand it shows him as the devout Catholic and stern moralist who feared that classical studies cultivated in excess, might corrupt young minds and draw them away from the Bible. Wimpheling never really resolved this basic tension in his thought, and in a few years the tenuous compromise he forged in the Isodoneus would dissolve.

But this break-down would occur only in the early sixteenth century after Wimpheling had given up his preaching position and spent three more years at the University of Heidelberg. These three years at Heidelberg were the high point of his career. He had attained a good reputation as a writer and now had the opportunity to express his religious and educational ideas to a university audience. He lectured on the epistles of Jerome and the poems of Prudentius,[37] gave sermons and delivered orations for several academic celebrations.

---

[36] Ibid., 148.

[37] Hautz, Geschichte der Universität Heidelberg, I, 326.

One of his speeches deserves special attention. Delivered on August 12, 1499 to the assembled masters and students of the arts faculty, it was entitled Oratio ad Gymnaophistas Heydelbergenses.[38] In the speech Wimpheling expanded many of his ideas on the shortcomings of traditional scholasticism. His first target was the rivalry and backbiting between the two scholastic *viae*, the *moderni* and the *antiqui*. Wimpheling attacked the petty jealousies of the professors and the hooliganism of the students which resulted from the rift. The fact that the two groups differed on a few points of philosophy did not justify the intensity of feeling between them. He went on to point out the important things both groups shared in common:

> We have one belief, one baptism, the same commandments and statutes, the same privileges and library, one head, one leader, the same path to blessedness. Why therefore the illwill and arguments? 39

Most of the speech was devoted to the theme Wimpheling had stated in the *Isodoneus*—the need and usefulness of classical studies. He said it was shameful that Heidelberg was lagging behind in the acceptance of poetry and oratory. Many younger and less prestigious schools, he pointed out, such as Basel, Freiburg, Tübingen, Ingolstadt and Vienna, had already established regular positions for professors of the studia humanitatis. Similarly, many preparatory schools in Germany were offering students a chance to acquaint themselves with classical letters. But when these students came to Heidelberg, the rectors of the burses prevented them from further study of the orators and poets.[40] He warned that as long as this condition persisted, Heidelberg did not deserve to be called a "university." He advised the teachers of scholastic logic and philosophy not to worry that the new subjects might detract from the established disciplines. "Poets and orators do not spurn dialectic and philosophy, but rather Ovid, Vergil, Persius and Juvenal in fact extol it." As Wimpheling stated, all he desired was that young boys delay the study of logic until they were well grounded in the rudiments of grammar.

---

[38] This brief but important speech was published, but today is extremely rare; none of the major American or European catalogues lists it, although a copy may exist in the Strasburg University library; I have had to rely on excerpts printed in secondary works, especially Josef Reigger, *Amoenitates Litterarie Friburgensis*, II (Ulm: Lebrecht, 1775), 194-196.

[39] Knepper, *op. cit.*, 33 (note).

Wimpheling's attacks on the rectors of the burses and the grammar which they taught, brought an immediate response from one of the criticized persons, Johannes Hosser, the rector of the bursa nova. Hosser had apparently argued that the logical precepts learned in the speculative grammar of Scotus[41] were more valuable to future theologians than anything that could be learned from poetry and rhetoric. In a public letter against his detractor, Wimpheling responded that the opposite was true:[42] knowledge of speculative grammar, he wrote, was ineffectual when a churchman tried to explain hymns, the epistles, the gospels and homilies to his listeners. Furthermore, with present practices, he knew a number of theologians who, when delivering sermons, "could bring forth nothing except what they have learned in logic or the formalities of Scotus." In Wimpheling's opinion, "this was shameful, dangerous and disgraceful to our University." He concluded by urging all future theologians and teachers to devote themsleves "to true Roman Latinity which is offered in Cicero, Valerius Maximus and similar authors."

---

[40] Taces quod hodie multi particularium scholarum magistri pueros instituunt in vera latinitate, in romana elegantia, in poetarum, in versuum compositione, etsi cum ad universitatem venerint huiuscemodi bene instituti pueri prohibeantur a bursarum retoribus, ut nunquam possint vel solacii causa (Presertim cum a dialectice aut philosophie studio sunt ociosi) veteres et pristinas latine compositionis lectiones revidere. . ." Knod, "Wimpheling und die Universität Heidelberg," 323 (note).

Wimpheling's attack on dialectic reached its peak in the introduction to his Adolescentia of 1501, his most ambitious production during his stay in Heidelberg.[43] Again addressing teachers, as he did in the Isodoneus, Wimpheling argued that excessive study of "obscure and difficult" problems of logic had no value for young students.

---

[41] The thirteenth-century Speculativa grammatica, attributed to Scotus, has recently been shown to have been written by Thomas of Erfurt.

[42] Printed by Knod, "Wimpheling und die Universität Heidelberg," 328, 329.

[43] German translation by Freundgen, op. cit., 175-330.

> They should be much more led to such studies through which one can obtain the healing of the soul, the honor of God and the fame of the state. They should be led therefore to such disciplines which are helpful and enjoyable for daily life. [44]

The studies he had in mind, of course, were the writings of the approved poets, historians and orators. The argument that these authors were valuable not just for grammar instruction, but also for attainment of the "good life" really added a new dimension to Wimpheling's humanist polemics. Toward the close of the introduction, he mocked the uselessness of the scholastic debates on controversial points in philosophy and theology:

> As if the health of soul and body, as if the growth of states and security of cities, as if the authority of the priesthood and the worth of the religious, as if the renewal and protection of the Roman Church, as if the power of virtue and ruin of vice, as if the defeat of the Turks and other enemies of our belief, finally as if the final goal of human life and the structure of the whole world rested on the question of universal concepts. [45]

Except for a list of worthwhile books which Wimpheling included at the beginning, little of Adolescentia dealt with curriculum or instructional matters. It consisted of a hodgepodge of rules, tips, poems, quotations and excerpts from the

---

[44] Freundgen, op. cit., 176.

[45] Ibid., 177.

Bible, all designed to help a teacher instruct a student in virtue and good morality. Its length and complexity precludes a thorough summary. His long list of rules for youth range all the way from "Love God and honor your parents" down to "Do not curl or dye your hair" (this makes the hair fall out, insults God the Father and frightens away guardian angels!).[46] The book does, however, show Wimpheling's humanism through its regular quotation of classical and Italian humanist authors. Among other things, it contained a list of uplifting sentences from Petrarch arranged in alphabetical order.

The deepening tension which Wimpheling later felt between humanism and scholastic theology will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. For now, it is enough to say that Wimpheling's early writings were typical of many German humanists before 1500. For him, humanism meant little more than reformed grammar instruction. Concern for good Latinity led him to attack certain scholastic practices, namely the medieval grammar manuals and the over-emphasis on dialectic, which drew students away from good literature. But he never criticized the traditional methods of scholastic theology and philosophy. In fact, when he felt these methods threatened, he would enthusiastically come to their defense.

---

[46] Ibid., 342.

While Wimpheling, Perger and Niavis poured their energy into grammar reform, other humanists devoted themselves to editing classical authors and composing manuals on letter writing and poetry. These men were also mild critics of scholasticism. The work of Andreas Hundern of Breslau offers a good example of this kind of activity. After studying at Cracow in the 1480's, he received his Master of Arts degree from Erfurt in 1487 and stayed on to teach poetry and rhetoric after Celtis's departure. In 1494 he composed a book for use in his course, entitled _Ars epistolandi nova Magistri Andree Hundern de wratislava_; it was based largely on a similar work by the Italian humanist Francesco Philelpho.[47] In the introduction he praised eloquence and defended the need for clear Latin expression, but failed to attack theological and philosophical pursuits of the scholastics. He also edited a small collection of poetry with selections mainly from Ovid.[48]

Another recurring theme in the writings of the humanists in the 1490's was the simple defense of poetical and rhetorical studies against "detractors" within the universities and the Church. A typical example was the _Dyalogus recommendacionis exprobriacionisque poetices_, written by Johannes Landsberger in 1494.[49] He was a student at Leipzig in the early 1490's and studied under Jacob Barinus, who privately taught rhetoric and poetry at the University throughout the decade. Landsberger's dialogue, which he claims to have written at his teacher's request, was directed against "certain men who would like to rob youth of the study of poetry." Fautor, humanism's defender, and Emulus, its detractor, were the two protagonists. Emulus contended that logic was the most important discipline, and that poetry was dangerous because it took students away from dialectic. He expanded this argument and added a number of other ones: poetry taught nothing about God, it corrupted morals and was generally useless, as shown by the fact that Plato wanted no poets in his ideal commonwealth. Fautor, in turn, reminded Emulus that St. Jerome had considered it worthless to spend too much time on dialectic and added that only a little logic was needed to understand philosophy. He further argued that poetry was useful because it taught eloquent expression, and also because it was the special province of poets and orators to teach morality and good behavior to the people. Finally Fautor turned on the Doctrinale and the medieval grammars, arguing that prolonged study of these books gradually drove people insane.

---

[47] Hain, _op. cit_., II, 113.

[48] Bauch, _Geschichte der Leipziger Frühhumanismus_, 118, 119.

If the preceding pages have given the impression that humanist polemics against scholasticism in the 1490's tended to be repetitive and unoriginal, that is the correct inference. Yet it is also true that the 1490's saw the first signs of interest in Neo-Platonism, a movement which ultimately was to have tremendous impact on the German humanist movement.[50] These currents found their origin in Italy, specifically in the writings of two men, Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. The work of these two writers was a distinct departure from the earlier traditions of Italian humanism. Humanists from Petrarch to Valla had been interested in classical literature—poetry, oratory and history. Their goal had been the acquisition of elegant speech and prose; they scorned the scholastics of the Middle Ages because of their barbarous and twisted Latin. In contrast, Ficino and Pico focused their attention on philosophy, theology and science. Ficino, for example, spent his life translating and expounding the work of Plato and the Neo-Platonists and sought to integrate Platonic and Christian teaching. Pico set himself a more imposing task—reconciling the doctrines of Christianity, Platonism, the Hebrew Cabala, Arabic philosophy and even elements of Pythagoreanism. Because of their speculative interests, both men had a more favorable attitude toward medieval scholasticism. The fact that scholastic authors wrote poor Latin did not negate their achievements in the search for philosophical truth.

---

[49] Ibid., 38-41.

---

[50] On Platonic influences in Germany, see: Lewis Spitz, "The Theologica Platonica in the Religious Thought of the German Humanists," Middle Ages-Reformation Volkskunde, Festschrift for John G. Kunstmann (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 118-133.

One of the first Germans to feel the influence of the speculative humanism practiced by Ficino and Pico was the colorful wandering poet, Conrad Celtis.[51] His attitudes toward scholasticism will be the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

Three distinct elements determined Celtis's intellectual position. First there was his early scholastic training at the University of Cologne. Celtis studied at Cologne for two years, attaining his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1480. He later felt that these years at Cologne had been largely wasteful, but his persistent interest in natural philosophy was undoubtedly a carry-over from his student days.

The second great influence on his development was his contact with the literary, rhetorical humanism of the type practiced by Petrarch and Valla. When and where he came to know humanism is not certain, since very few details about his early life are known. By Celtis's own account, his brief acquaintance with Rudolph Agricola in 1485 gave him the inspiration to follow a humanist career. In his first book, the *Ars versificandi* (1486), he expressed his indebtedness to Agricola in an introductory poem. As a peasant's son, wrote Celtis, he had never had an opportunity to travel and learn the wonders of antiquity first hand. Rather it was Rudolph Agricola "who carried away the muses from their Aonian peak . . .and by whom the sisters repaired their harshly damaged threads—" who first encouraged him in these things and taught him the rudiments of Greek and Hebrew.[52]

---

[51] Lewis W. Spitz, Conrad Celtis, the German Arch-Humanist (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957); also by Spitz, "Celtis, the Arch-Humanist," The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, 81-110; Friedrich von Bezold, "Conrad Celtis, der deutsche Erzhumanist," Historische Zeitschrift, XLIX (1883), 299-311; Michael Seidlmayer, "Konrad Celtis," Jahrbuch für Fränkische Landesforschung, XIX (1959), 395-416; Karl Hartfelder, "Der Humanist Celtis Als Lehrer," Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Pädagogik, XXIX (1883), 299-311.

The third and final influence on Celtis was the Platonism he imbibed during his one trip to Italy. Between 1486 and 1488 he saw all the major Italian cities, first Venice, then Padua, Ferrara, Florence and finally Rome. Celtis undoubtedly learned a great deal about the Italian achievements in rhetoric, poetry and classical philology. But more important, he acquired an interest in Neo-Platonic philosophy which stayed with him for the rest of his life.

---

[52] ". . .Non me Rudolfum page sed Agricolam
Qui secum placidas abduxit vertice musas
Aonio, meque his Hedelberge favens
Quique mihi tribuit aliena ydeomata: gresos
Noscere et hebrees: Doctus utrosque legens
Cui lacere indigna ruperunt fila sorores
Rudolphum Agricolam fac deus arcebeet"

Conrad Celtis, *Ars versicandi et carminum conradi celtis protucii poete laureati* (Leipzig: 1486), Aii.

Of the three forces in Celtis's intellectual make-up, the rhetorical-literary element was the strongest. Many of his attacks on scholasticism resulted from his devotion to eloquence. For example, the lack of training in Latin elegance at Cologne was one reason he looked back on his own university training with disdain. He expressed his feelings in an ode entitled "To Wilhelm Mommerloch, Citizen of Cologne and Philosopher."[53] Attacking logic in a typically humanist fashion, Celtis recalled that "it was there with you that I learned to introduce misleading sophistries by tortuous syllogism, and all the other lumber of contentious dialectic." He regretted that none of his professors cared for grammar or polished style, and complained that "humanist poetry is an object of derision, and the works of Vergil and Cicero are regarded with that repugnance with which a Jew regards pork."

The call for eloquence was the dominant argument in Celtis's famous "Inaugural Oration at Ingolstadt," delivered on August 31, 1492.[54] The speech had a single theme which

---

[53] "Ad Vilhelmum Mommerlochum civem Coloniensem et philosophem." Conrad Celtis, Libri Odarum Quattuor, ed., Felicitas Pindter (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1937), 88. English translation, Leo Forster, ed., Selections from Conrad Celtis (Cambridge: University Press, 1948), 23.

[54] Text and English translation printed by Forster, op. cit., 36-65.

Celtis rephrased and restated to have maximum impact on his listeners. It was this: in culture and politics, Germany was corrupted and decayed; the only remedy was a revival of the wisdom and eloquence of the Greeks and Romans. But as will be seen, Celtis the humanist rather than Celtis the philosopher was speaking. In this oration, he strongly stressed the glories of eloquence, and rather neglected the need for wisdom.

The orator introduced his attack on scholasticism by painting a gloomy picture of Germany's political impotence. The Empire was surrounded by enemies; much of its territory was in the hands of foreign kings; Italian bankers and merchants were bleeding the country white; internally "we run riot among ourselves with civil strife." Celtis argued that all these political shortcomings were symptoms of a more serious condition—the cultural depravity of the German people, and especially of her rulers. The great leaders of the past such as Moses, "the legislator of our ancient religion," and Charlemagne, "sprung of the noble race of Franks," were different from these modern rulers; they had spent their days with legislation and military affairs and their nights with philosophy. "But our princes," Celtis continued, "look askance at learning and have no part in it, they are held up as a laughing stock by other nations and are properly ridiculed as barbarians."[55]

What part did the scholastic universities play in this situation? Celtis never claimed that Germany's problems could all be ascribed to the scholastic methods of its schools. But he did assert that in their present structure the universities were powerless to allay Germany's cultural and political malaise. To Celtis, the existance of the Empire's fourteen universities was no reason to "maintain that because of them barbarism has been removed, that counsel has been taken and a way made clear for good character and honorable accomplishments."[56] In all of Germany, he continued, there was only a handful of men with true eloquence and learning. The reason for this was the stubborn refusal of the scholastics to try anything new:

> . . .in our study of such subjects (which I might almost call playing at study) all those who expound the Latin poets and authors are suppressed, and anyone who reveals the work of nature and the wisdom of its director by mathematical truth or whose perception goes a little deeper than that of the common herd is considered almost sacrilegious. [57]

Furthermore, Celtis complained, "those who criticize and decry our worn-out system of studies and produce new principles from genuine Roman educational practice" were pursued with hatred and calumny. As a result, philosophy is "trampled under foot and frittered away" and reduced to "monstrous abstractions and empty chimaeras."[58]

---

[55] *Ibid*., 51.

[56] *Ibid*., 57.

[57] *Ibid*.

Celtis's oration was a masterpiece of disparagement and denunciation, but it fell short in constructive criticism. As an alternative to prevailing methods, Celtis called for a return to "genuine Roman educational practice," whose goal he interpreted as the pursuit of wisdom and eloquence. At the very beginning of his speech Celtis stated he would be satisfied if he gave his listeners some incentive to puruse these two goals. He added that a truly cultured man had "to brood and sweat with great labor and sacrifice of sleep over these two things, that is, the writings of the philosophers and the writings of the poets and orators of old."[59] The oration's greatest fault was that Celtis never explained what kind of philosophy he wanted to substitute for the scholastic variety. From scattered references, the listener learned that philosophy was something good (all the great rulers spent their nights studying it); they also learned that in their own day it was neglected ("trampled under foot and frittered away") and perverted ("an utterly worthless harvest of empty words"). But the listener did not hear anything about the comparative merits of Aristotle and Plato, the relative importance of natural and moral philosophy or the final goal of philosophic inquiry.

---

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., 41.

The fact is that Celtis showed much more enthusiasm for eloquence in his speech than for philosophy. This is understandable, since Celtis, then a professor at Ingolstadt, was propounding on eloquence rather than wisdom in his courses. Just as Agricola had done in his letter to Barbarinus, Celtis argued that knowledge was worthless without the power of elegant expression.

> For what in the world is the use of much knowledge and a sense of the sublime and the beautiful if one is unable to enjoy that unique element in human happiness, the power to transmit one's thought to posterity? 60

Furthermore, Celtis considered eloquence—the way a person speaks and writes—the only true sign of a learned man. And in the final paragraph of his speech, when he briefly summarized what he considered the proper sequence of studies, he again stressed eloquence rather than wisdom. The young student should first be exposed to songs and poetry, for "under the influence. . .of beauty and polished language which such works contain, the minds of the young are molded into shape." He then should proceed to study the "weightier philosophers and orators." But the final goal was a man with literary skills rather than philosophical insight:

> From these they can at length rise to original composition and the sublimity of the art of poetry with

---

[60] *Ibid.*

> its imagery, finally to achieve the reputation of illustrious writers by composing histories and poems, and to win thereafter immortality for themselves and renown for their native land. [61]

In the preference it shows for eloquence, Celtis's Ingolstadt oration gave a distorted picture of the poet's intellectual position. For in a confused, dilettantish way, Celtis showed a genuine interest in philosophy throughout his life.[62] He never wrote anything that approached a systematic philosophic treatise. But he sprinkled philosophical concepts and ideas throughout his poetry and correspondence.

The scholastic training which Celtis had received at Cologne clearly affected his views on philosophy. Unlike most of the Italian humanists, Celtis found the natural philosophy of the scholastics more exciting than the moral philosophy of the classical authors. As Agricola had done, Celtis adopted Cicero's definition of philosophy as "the knowledge of all things divine and human and their causes." In the introductory letter he attatched to his edition of Apuleius's De mundo in 1502, he urged his readers:

> . . .to lovingly embrace this pristine and lucid consideration of the nature of things; and at last , . . once the fog has been dispersed and cleared away, turn from old, empty trifles and slippery and foaming verbal controversies to solider, older, and more praiseworthy disciplines. [63]

---

[61] Ibid., 65.

[62] Lewis Spitz, "The Philosophy of Conrad Celtis," Studies in the Renaissance, I (1954), 22-38.

What these "more praiseworthy disciplines" were, Celtis had already outlined in an ode written in 1492, "What the Future Philosopher ought to Know."[64] After learning Latin and putting away the "boorish sounds of your ancestral tongue," Celtis urged the young philosopher to explore the causes of all things in nature:

> Find out the nature of formless Chaos, where the
> elements stream forth in forms of beauty with
> discordant purposes, mixing the seeds
> of the world, which return in the end whence
> they came.
>
> Find out with soaring mind the causes of
> individual things: investigate the blowing
> of the winds and the tides of the raging sea.
>
> Find out why dark hollows of the earth produce
> sulphur and veins of fair metals, and why
> hot springs restore the bodies of the sick;
>
> Find out why lightning cracks so loudly
> as it darts from the clouds, and study the
> storming of rain, slow falling snow and
> icy hail.

---

[63] "Quod ex ea lectione et rerum intelligentia plurimum desiderii et amoris nostrorum auditorum animis iniectum et inculcatum iri speramus, quo priscam illam et manifestam de rerum natura tractationem amplectentur et concupiscant; resipiscantque aliquando nova illa et fausta siderum conversione a veteribus illis et inanibus nugis lubricisque illis et spumosis, quod cum venia dico, vocum contentionibus detersaque et dispulsa caligine prisca et vera philosophia duce ad solidiores et veteres laudatissimas disciplinas se convertent." Hans Rupprich, ed., Der Briefwechsel des Conrad Celtis (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1934), 297.

[64] "Ad Sigismundum Fusilium Vratislaviensem De his quod futurus philosophus scire debeat" Text and English translation by Forster, *op. cit*., 28-33.

> Learn to discourse of the planets which move in free orbits apart, and of the Sun's eclipse when the pale-faced Moon has put his chariot to flight.
>
> Learn with wonder of shooting stars that escape from the vaulted sky, of the twin couch of the sun:

Celtis believed that the philosopher should also be competent in geography and history. As he put it in his ode, "Learn to tell the peoples scattered over the globe and their different languages and customs, and tell beneath what clime they occupy this earth that hovers in the air." At the very end of the ode, Celtis conceded that the future philosopher should also know something of moral philosophy. He urged him to "climb nobly up the straight and noble path of virtue." But the study of ethics was obviously less appealing to Celtis than the study of nature.

Celtis's fascination with natural philosophy explains his admiration for at least two scholastic philosophers, Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus. Both men had written extensively on Aristotelian science, astronomy and natural philosophy. In his ode "To Wilhelm Mommerloch," previously mentioned, Celtis wrote that his only happy memory of Cologne was the study of these two men:

> There you and I handled the sacred books of ancient wisdom, there I learnt what high lore Albertus and Thomas taught about the nature of the universe. [65]

---

[65] *Ibid.*, 23.

Of the two, Albertus was more attractive to Celtis, undoubtedly because of his German nationality. The humanist in fact composed two epigrams in honor of Albertus Magnus. One of them, "On the Illusions of Albertus Magnus" is somewhat obscure in meaning.[66] In a dream, someone appears before Albertus and offers him high ecclesiastical honors and a great palace. Albertus is briefly interested; but then he realizes he is being deceived, and he puts the tempter to flight. Perhaps the epigram referred to the two-year period which Albertus had spent as Bishop of Regensburg. Celtis would have interpreted this as a "deception" of Albertus on two counts. First it had meant that Albertus was drawn away from his studies; second it meant that a high-minded German had briefly joined forces with the corrupt Roman hierarchy, which Celtis detested. The second epigram "On the Fatherland and Teaching of Albertus Magnus," praised Albertus's Swabian background and his achievements as a natural philosopher.[67] According to Celtis, Albertus had described the whole world and "laid open all the stars of the wandering sky." He added that "whatever has the earth and sky, and what the air contains, that man showed us through his genius." Finally he urged the reader to"pay attention" to his teaching and to "read his lucid writings."[68]

---

[66] Conrad Celtis, "De praestigiis Alberti Magni," *Fünf Bücher Epigramme von Konrad Celtes*, Karl Hartfelder, ed., (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1963), 32.

[67] "De patrice et doctrina Alberti Magni," *ibid.*, 41.

Celtis's interests in natural philosophy also encouraged him at times to praise Aristotle, the man whose writings were the basis for all of scholastic philosophy and theology. In his introduction to Apuleius's De mundo, for example, he mentioned him favorably and called him summus Aristoteles.[69] Celtis's correspondents often mentioned Aristotle, and friends in Italy kept him informed when new editions of his work appeared.[70]

For all his admiration of the work of Aristotle and Albertus Magnus on natural philosophy, Celtis was increasingly drawn to "divine Plato" in the last years of his life. He expressed his debt to Plato most clearly in the introduction to Apuleius.[71] Here he discussed the shadowy world of divine things and invisible forms above the world of everyday experience. In this passage Celtis argued that this invisible world was the true goal of wisdom. This higher wisdom was mysterious and archane, and attainable only by a few men. Although he elsewhere seemed interested in Pythagorean number symbolism, in this passage he argued that contemplation and virtue were the best paths in the quest for knowledge of divine things. The final stage of contemplation was a state of complete, ineffable joy. Celtis wrote that "nothing more delightful and agreeable could happen to human minds in this course of life than to have time for the contemplation of those things, whose knowledge calls souls out of their prisons and speeds them above into divine and ethereal movements and loves."[72] Those who have achieved this, he continued, are separated from their body and see "that highest felicity and blessedness promised by the divine oracle to all good men." "Oh incredible sweetness, of most alluring and divine pleasure to banquet with highest Jove on nectar and ambrosia, as the fables of the poets put it, and revel with the gods."[73]

---

[68] "Quidquid habet tellus, mareque et quod concipit aër,
Ingenio nobis prodidit ille suo.
Ergo age, doctrinam quam vis cognoscere veram,
Alberti Magni candida scripta legas."
ibid., 41.

[69] Briefwechsel des Conrad Celtis, 296.

[70] Ibid., 558.

[71] Apuleius, the second century Greek, who was educated in Egypt, fascinated the Florentine Platonists because of his interests in magic. See Frances E. Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (Chicago: University Press, 1964), passim. This too may have been a factor with Celtis, but the German humanist was also attracted by Apuleius's writings on astronomy and natural philosophy.

---

[72] Nihil ego suavius et dulcius humanis mentibus accedere in hoc brevi vitae curriculo posse existimavi quam earum rerum contemplationi vacare, per quarum cognitionem evocati a carceribus suis animi in divinos et aethereos rapiuntur motus et affectus, Briefwechsel des Conrad Celtis, 296.

[73] "O incredibilem suavitem, o blandissimam et divinam voluptatem, qua nectar et ambrosiam, ut in fabulis poetarum est, cum summo Jove epulantes degustamus deorumque numero inserti convivamur." ibid.

Did Celtis's Platonism affect his criticisms of scholasticism? It may have softened Celtis's attitude toward some scholastic philosophers, but it never led him to defend the scholastics against the poets as Pico had done. In addition, it was probably Platonism which caused Celtis to work for the inclusion of mathematics in the scholastic curriculum. For Celtis, a knowledge of mathematics was important not only for astrological studies, but also because numbers and geometrical figures symbolically contained certain secrets of the universe. Thus he complained that at Cologne, "mathematics and the mysteries of numbers are unknown."[74] Platonism also helps explain the alliance he forged between poetry and mathematics in the Poets College he conceived at Vienna in 1502. The College had a faculty of four—two poets and two mathematicians.

Thus in spite of his boisterous attacks on university practices, Celtis was definitely sympathetic to some aspects of scholasticism. He criticized the schoolmen for their ignorance of poetry and literature; he chided them for their exclusive interest in logic and their neglect of mathematics. But he still admired Aristotle and the work of Albertus and Aquinas. In fact he even conceived of writing a work, Parnassus biceps, which he hoped would show the compatability of humanism and theology.[75] Celtis, like Wimpheling, found it possible to reconcile humanist ideas and certain scholastic practices.

---

[74] Forster, op. cit., 23.

In summary, the humanist critique of scholasticism before 1500 did not imply a total rejection of traditional methods. The humanists conceded that Aristotelian philosophy was worthy of study, and held back from criticizing the scholastic theologians. They did feel that university education could be improved by instituting courses on poetry and rhetoric, by reforming grammar instruction and by decreasing the time spent on dialectic. But even in their writings on grammar the humanists occasionally borrowed from scholastic authors. Wimpheling, for example, felt that some sections of the Doctrinale were useful, and Celtis, in an early manual on versification, even lifted some sections directly from the same source.[76] How were the humanist aspirations received by the universities? The following chapter will seek an answer to this question.

---

[75] In the autobiography included in the 1513 edition of his Odes, Celtis wrote, "Scripsit Parnasum bicipitem, in quo poetas et theologos concordat." Briefwechsel des Conrad Celtis, 613; if he did in fact finish the work, no copies are extant today.

[76] The lines are quoted by Bauch, Geschichte des Leipziger Frühhumanismus, 18.

CHAPTER IV

HUMANISM AND THE UNIVERSITIES

1480-1500

The reception of humanism at the German universities in the 1480's and 1490's varied considerably from school to school. At one end of the spectrum were the three northernmost universities, Cologne, Rostock and Greifswald, where humanist impact was negligible. A small handful of men who fashioned themselves as wandering poets taught at each of these schools, but they stayed for short periods and had no lasting influence. In fact the Cologne matriculation book lists only one such figure, Johannes Stammeler of Augsburg, Professor artis humanitatis, who taught for a semester in 1491.[1] In 1498, Rudolph of Langen, the humanist schoolmaster from Münster, was fully justified when he wrote the Cologne city council complaining that "the poets and professors of humanist studies were too little valued at the University."[2] In his autobiography, Celtis claims to have taught at Rostock, but it must have been for a very short time.[3]

---

[1] Hermann Keussen, Die alte Universität Köln (Cologne: Creutzer, 1934), 191.

[2] Hermann Keussen, "Regesten und Auszüge zur Geschichte der Universität Köln," Mitteilungen aus dem Stadtarchiv von Köln, XXXVI,XXXVII (1918), 296.

[3] Celtis, Briefwechsel, 610.

At another group of three universities, Tübingen, Freiburg-im-Breisgau and Erfurt, there was more humanist activity but no curriculum reform and no advancement of the humanists' official status. At Freiburg, where a chair of rhetoric had been founded in 1471, part-time "amateur" humanists held the position during the 1480's and 90's. At first, the lecturer was Johann Lunson, an obscure figure who left no literary remains; he was followed by another unknown, Gabriel Münzthaler. He lectured on both classical literature and law until 1500, when he gave up the humanist lectureship to devote full time to his legal studies. Ulrich Zasius, later a famous jurist, then took over the lectures on rhetoric with a salary of thirty-two florins.[4] At Tübingen, there is no evidence that anyone at all held the established humanist lectureship until 1496, when Heinrich Bebel received the appointment.[5]

At Erfurt a number of men, including Celtis, gave private lessons on poetry and rhetoric, but there was no attempt on the part of the city government to establish a regular position for them. The theory that Erfurt was a great leader in the reception of German humanism is a myth stemming from the fanciful nineteenth-century history of the school by F.W. Kampschulte.[6] Celtis and the other less-famous humanist teachers found a few friends among the Erfurt scholastics, but no general acceptance of their ideas.[7]

---

[4] On October 3, 1500 the University Council minutes read as follows: "Conclusum quod velit Universitas dividere lecturam Institutionum et in Poesis per duos Lectores, et velit dare pinguius stipendium illi lecturae, quam Doctor Gabriel elegisset. Et in ejus favorem hoc conclusum est, consideratis ipsius laboribus praeteritis et diligentia. Item fuit assumptum Udalricus Zasius ad lecturam in Poesi, et eidem pro stipendio fuerunt addicti et promisi triginta duo foreni pro suo stipendio annuo, quos gratani animo acceptavit." Schreiber, op. cit., I, 70, 71.

[5] Haller, Die Anfänge der Universität Tübingen, 210, 211.

At another group of three universities, Leipzig, Heidelberg, and Ingolstadt, the government made minor attempts to promote humanist learning in the late 1490's. At Leipzig there were definite signs of humanist interests in the 1480's. In 1484, for example, when Virgilius Wellendorfer drew up a list of courses before taking his master's examination, he included a course by Johannes de Bratislavia on a book by Augustini Dati, the Sienese humanist who had died in 1478. Wellendorfer did not name the book, but he probably was referring to Dati's Isagogius. . .de modo scribendi, a work on letter writing.[8] Celtis lectured at Leipzig in 1486, and several minor German humanists carried on in the 1490's.

---

[6] Die Universität Erfurt in ihrem Verhältnisse zu dem Humanismus und der Reformation, 2 vols. (Trier: Lintz, 1858).

[7] In 1497 Celtis received a letter from Petrus Peltz, an Erfurt theologian, giving him news about a number of men Celtis had befriended during his year at Erfurt. Celtis, Briefwechsel, 254.

[8] Rudolf Helssig, "Die wissenschaftlichen Vorbedingungen für Baccalaureat im Artibus und Magisterium," Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Leipzig (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1909), 14.

In 1496 Leipzig's patron, the government of Ducal Saxony, attempted a general reform of the school's statutes. Little documentation exists and there is no information about the men who were behind the reform. But apparently a feeling that the University was in a state of decline and degeneration motivated the reforms. When the government presented its proposals in 1496, it remarked that in the past Leipzig had produced large numbers of theologians, philosophers, astronomers, preachers, lawyers and physicians, but that in the past few years, "either through the injury of time or the idleness and torpor of persons, the University had declined into a state of sluggishness." Most of the governmental decrees dealt with administrative problems or were general exhortations for honesty, sobriety and obedience to University laws.[9] Of the two proposals on curriculum, one concerned mathematics. It pointed out that books on mathematics were rarely lectured on, and directed the faculty of arts to institute courses "on the more useful mathematics books, Euclid, common perspective and the like." The second proposal more clearly shows the impact of humanist ideas. It called for the discontinuation of lectures on the logic of Hesbri, a fourteenth century work on sophisms, "since it offered no real result." In its place each candidate for the Masters degree had to hear lectures on Aristotle's Rhetoric, to be taught by a regular member of the faculty.[10] The fact that Aristotle was retained as the authority and that a faculty member rather than a special salaried humanist was to do the teaching suggests that some kind of compromise might have been worked out between the scholastics and the humanist reformers.

---

[9] Friedrich Zarncke, Die Statutenbücher der Universität Leipzig (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1861), 16-27.

At Heidelberg, the attempt of the Palatine Elector to institute lectures on Greek in 1498 ended in failure. Dionysius Reuchlin, the brother of the famous Hebraist, Johannes Reuchlin, was to have received the position, but the faculty of arts refused to co-operate. On August 1, it denied the Elector's request to grant Reuchlin a lecture hall, stipulating that the new teacher first participate in a disputation and give evidence that he had received his Master of Arts. On August 6 the Elector asked "most earnestly" that the faculty change its position, but once again it refused.[11]

Heidelberg had no regular humanist lecturer until after the Reformation. Some authorities have stated that Jacob Wimpheling held a salaried lectureship for classical studies when he came to Heidelberg in 1498. But since Wimpheling himself complained in 1499 that no such position existed at the University, this theory is extremely doubtful.[12] In general, the reception of humanism at Heidelberg was slower than at several other German schools. In light of humanism's early introduction through Luder, Agricola's teaching activity and the humanist interests within the Palatine court and Bishop Dalberg's circle, this lack of progress is surprising.

---

[10] "Quia tales lectio loicae Hesbri parum fructus in se habeat, ideo volumus, quod loco ejusdem lectiones pro magisterio legatur de cetero liber rhetoricorum Aristotelis." Ibid., 17.

[11] Winckelmann, Urkundenbuch der Universität Heidelberg, II, 62, 63.

Ingolstadt was the third university where minor curriculum reforms were attempted in the years before 1500. The Bavarian university began to regularly pay humanist lecturers for rhetoric in the late 1470's, and the position was consistently filled in the period under consideration. During the 1480's and early 90's, Johannes Riedner, an older man who had studied law in Italy, lectured on the studia humanitatis.[13] After some difficulties (Riedner's retirement was supposedly imminent, but he kept postponing it), Celtis succeeded him in 1492. At Ingolstadt and elsewhere, Celtis had a disastrous teaching career. At Leipzig, for example, he had left in disgrace when a Bohemian humanist accused him of plagiarizing some of his poems.[14] At Ingolstadt, his constant salary complaints, his casual teaching and his frequent travels gained him few admirers among his scholastic colleagues. In 1492, for example, after the delivery of his inaugural oration, Celtis was gone for almost a year and a half. Soon after his departure, he casually wrote his jurist friend Sixtus Tucher that he could have "full hope" for his return and added "I have no doubt you and my other friends will see to the continuation of my stipend."[15] Tucher wrote back that some professors were upset over his prolonged absence.[16] Celtis retorted that he was gaining "immortal ornament, fame, advantage and growth for our Germany and this school." He cursed his scholastic opponents and "the cleverness of servile men and barbarians, always opposed to things of virtue and sound teaching, things they do not know, do not wish to know, or what I would approve more, would not ever know."[17]

---

[12] See Chapter III, p. 125.

[13] Bauch, Die Anfänge des Humanismus in Ingolstadt, 27.

[14] Spitz, Conrad Celtis, 8, 9.

There are several signs that the scholastics were not greatly enamored with Celtis. For example, in 1494, when Celtis asked permission to use the arts faculty library, the faculty granted his request, but only if he promised to abide by the "sense of the faculty's decrees;"he was also told "to keep himself friendly toward the faculty, not dislocating and annoying the other masters."[18] If his behavior was poor, they warned he could expect that the faculty would change its mind. His friends in Bavaria became sure his wanderings would finally exhaust the patience of the University officials. Erasmus Australis, librarian at a Regensburg monastery, urgently wrote him in 1494 "to stop that wandering around and stay in one place and location." He added,

---

[15] "Ego de te et aliis amicis dubitare non debeo super continuatione stipendii." Celtis, Briefwechsel, 66.

[16] Ibid., 73.

[17] "Sed facile servilium hominum et barbarorum ingenio omnia deprevantur et sinisteritate corrumpuntur, qui virtuti et doctrinae semper adversi, quam ipsi aut non intelligunt, vel intelligere non volunt aut, quod magis probo, intelligere non debent." ibid., 72, 73.

> I hear that not a little talk may arise and rather has arisen, because you have hardly for six weeks concerned yourself with your main task of lecturing for which you after all were hired, and that it therefore could easily happen that you may be removed from your regular teaching post. 19

Celtis closed out his unfortunate career at Ingolstadt in 1496 in an atmosphere of ill-will and recrimination. Even his own students got together and wrote him a note attacking his aberrant behavior. They claimed his "long and incessant scoldings" forced them "to make a reply in the name of truth." They wrote,

> You accuse us of madness and charge that we are

---

[18] "Prima die Maij concessit facultas arcium, legittime congregata, domino Conrado Celtis facultem ingrediendi liberiam et clavem ad eandem, ita tamen, quod promittat secundum tenorem decretorum facultatis arcium, admoneatur etiam, quatenus se amicabilem erge facultatem habeat, magistros non dispromovendo et carpendo, vicissitudinem semper ex facultate expectaturus." Bauch, Die Anfänge des Humanismus in Ingolstadt, 59, 60.

[19] Celtis, Briefwechsel, 137; English translation by Spitz, Conrad Celtis, 44.

> stupid barbarians, and you call wild beasts those whose fees support you.... . This we might have born with better grace, but for the fact that you yourself abound in the faults of which you accuse us. For what of the fact that, while you carp about us, you yourself are so torpid from dissipation that in private conversation your drowsy head droops to your elbow like a figure eight. 20

They insulted him further, saying that Celtis spoke neither "plain argument nor cultured speech nor elegant Latin expressions." Finally they spoke of "more stringent measures" unless he changes his habits. In return, Celtis showed his bad temper by penning a series of poems in which he attacked the Bavarians, his patron, Duke George,[21] and some of his former friends on the law and medicine faculties.[22] In Celtis's case, his personal behavior rather than his educational theories caused the scholastics to distrust him.

In 1497, declining student enrollment stimulated the Bavarian government to take a stronger hand in University affairs. It appointed Jacob Locher, one of Celtis's students, as lecturer on the humanities; more important, it initiated a reform of the University statutes. In 1497, Duke George appointed a commission, partly of ducal advisers, partly of University professors, to investigate the school's shortcomings;

---

[20] Celtis, Briefwechsel, 286, 287; English translation by Lynn Thorndike, University Records and Life in the Middle Ages (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 366, 367.

[21] Celtis, Fünf Bücher Epigramme, 44.

[22] Celtis, Libri Odarum Quattuor, 109.

after a summer of deliberations, it presented its proposals. Actually there were few perceptible signs of humanist influence on the proposed reforms.[23] Most of them dealt with purely administrative reforms such as student fees, clothing regulations, choosing of examiners and the number of lectures a professor could miss before losing his salary (ten for jurists and theologians, twenty for physicians). There were also the usual demands for peace and equality between the *via antiqua* and *via moderna*, and one surprising proposal that all Bavarian students be required to go to Ingolstadt, and nowhere else. The one proposal to touch directly on curriculum matters was puzzling. It stated that "students should not spend so much time in the first and second part and in the *parva logicales*, rather that they should learn in the logic of Peter of Spain and Aristotle."[24] There is no hint about the identification of the "first and second part"but it probably referred to the first two parts of Alexander Villedieu's *Doctrinale*. More perplexing is that Peter of Spain, the recommended author, had himself written a *Parva logicales*, the book to be discontinued. The explanation probably lies in the fact that after Peter of Spain, many logicians had written dialectical handbooks entitled Parva logicales. The reformers apparently intended to return to the original composition. No matter what the answer may be, the proposal can hardly be interpreted as a humanist victory.

---

[23] Prantl, *Geschichte der Ludwig-Maximillian Universität*, II, 132-135.

[24] "Item das die schuler nit so lanng in prima und secunda parte und in parvis loycalibus stunden, sonnder das sy in der loycam Petro Hispano und Arestoteles lerten," *ibid.*, 133.

In the last decades of the fifteenth century, Vienna was again the most important university for the study of the relationship of humanism and scholasticism in the Empire. The school declined severely in the 1480's due to the Hungarian siege and occupation. Humanism in these years was in an eclipse. An Italian, Cinthus de Burgo Sancti Sepulchri was the only humanist mentioned in the University records. He briefly gave lectures on rhetoric in 1487, but when he failed to receive a stipend from the University or the Hungarian King, he left Vienna and did not return.[25]

In the 1490's humanism again began to make rapid strides at the Austrian university. The stimulus for the humanist advance did not come from within the academic corporation. Although all the faculties had some men with interests in rhetoric and classical literature, the force behind the further assimilation of humanism was the imperial court and council, then dominated by men with strong humanist interests.

---

[25] Bauch, Frühhumanismus in Wien, 98.

The University accepted increased government control in the 1490's because of the financial difficulties it had inherited from the previous decade. Fees from the students had fallen off, and so had governmental assistance. As a result, when the Hungarians were driven out in 1490, the University was forced to petition the Emperor for a confirmation of privileges and a resumption of financial support. In return, it agreed to accept the direction of a special superintendent, appointed by the Emperor, who, though not a member of the academic corporation, would be the general overseer of the whole university.[26] The Emperor, who was peeved at the University for its co-operation with the Hungarians, hesitated briefly, but finally agreed in January 1491. He named as superintendant, Bernard Perger, the author of the Nova Grammatica.

Perger proved to be a reform-minded superintendant. In his first speech to the University council he warned that he and the Emperor considered many things in the University in need of change.[27] But the first concrete attempts came a year and a half later, in October 1492. On October 13, the Deacon of the arts faculty, George Pattersdorfer, who had lectured on humanist subjects in the 1470's, announced in a faculty meeting that there were four areas in which the government expected reform.[28] First, the government claimed that scholars and bachelors were occupied in "vane things and useless sophisms" and had no concern for "the texts and other fundamentals." Second, lectures were not given with sufficient regularity. Third, the University spent too much time on Occam, and failed to teach "distinguished and approved doctors in the way of other universities, such as Scotus, Albertus Magnus and other such men." Finally students were not examined on the texts, but only on commentaries.[29] The deacon further announced that the superintendent had requested the formation of a committee to meet with him in the hope of finding remedies.

---

[26] Documents in Kink, op. cit., I, part 2, 114.

[27] Grossman, "Die Frühzeit des Humanismus in Wien," 300, 301.

It is unfortunate that more is not known about the faculty members who worked with the government in planning the reforms. For apparently a temporary alliance had been forged between humanists and proponents of the via antiqua. Both groups shared a desire to change the teaching traditions of a nominalist university like Vienna: the humanists wanted less emphasis on logic and logical commentaries; the antiqui wanted increased study of Albertus Magnus and other realist writers. The existence of such an alliance at Vienna, however, does not really support Hermelink's contention that humanism in some way or other developed out of the realist revival of the fifteenth century.[30] All it proved was that both groups had an aversion for nominalism; they opposed it for different reasons, but still found it convenient to cooperate to attain specific goals.

---

[28] Faculty records printed by Kink, op. cit., I, part I, 194; Lhotsky, op. cit., 178, 179.

[29] "Primo quidem in eo, quod scolares et baccalarii nostre facultatis occuparentur dumtaxat rebus vanis et inutilibus sophismatibus relictis textibus et aliis fundamentalibus. Secundo, quod nec lectiones fierent, sicut fieri deberent, utiliter et diligenter, . . . Tertio, quod facultas in doctrina nullum ex insignibus et approbatis doctoribus more aliarum universitatum sequeretur, puta Scotum "doctorem subtilem," Albertum Magnum vel alium talem, sed nec Occam. Quarto, quod nec in textualibus fierent examina graduandorum, sed solum in aliis, et ob hoc sic etiam nonnumquam scolares textus assumere inciperent, tamen statim iterum deponerent solum de hiis curantes, quibus examinantur." Lhotsky, op. cit., 178, 179.

Despite the moderation of the proposals and their exclusive concern with logic and scholastic commentaries, the humanists at the University were pleased that the first step was being taken toward curriculum reform. A physician, Batholomäus Stäber, for example, wrote Celtis early in 1493 that "by the will of the Emperor" the University was being cleansed "of its rough and thorny spines," and further that the studium humanitatis would soon have a "special place among the arts."[31]

---

[30] See Preface, vii, viii.

[31] "Opportune venisses profecto in studium nostrum generale a sentibus et dumosis spinis nuper volente Caesare mundatum, et imprimis studium humanitatis praecipuum locum in hiis, quae liberalium artium sunt, maiestas imperialis prae aliis mandat habere." Celtis, Briefwechsel, 96, 97.

Actually the arts faculty agreed to only one of the proposals; in June 1493 it required that lectures and examinations on the *Posterior Analytics*, the *Old Logic*, the *Physics* and *De Anima* should be based more on the texts than on commentaries.[32]

Stäber had written in his letter that "the *studium humanitatis* would have a special place among the arts." He referred to Perger's intention of bringing to Vienna a special, salaried lecturer on the humanities, as had already been done at Freiburg, Ingolstadt and Tübingen. Between 1493 and 1500 three different men held this position. Their experiences at Vienna, which are well-documented in the arts faculty records, are indicative of what the "scholastic-humanist clash" really involved in the context of the University's daily life.

Perger's first choice for the new position was an Austrian monk, C. Paulus Amaltheus. Since nothing is known about his education, it is not certain where he developed his poetic interests. He seems to have enjoyed imperial favor since 1489, when he composed a long and flattering poem about Frederick III. A squabble with the scholastic arts faculty over salary and lecture hours cut short Amaltheus's career as a university lecturer. The original agreement had called for a salary of fifty florins, with the understanding that the humanist would lecture two times a day. But at the beginning of his appointment, in June 1493, he appeared before the faculty and stated "it was impossible, inhuman and disgraceful that he should have to give two lectures in one day and actually was prepared to give only one lecture." But the faculty saw no reason to change the contract and turned down the humanist's request.[33] Amaltheus then turned to the superintendent for support, and during the next few months the records of the faculty include a long series of letters and personal appeals by the government on his behalf. But even a letter from the Emperor himself had no effect. In fact, late in the summer the faculty cut Amaltheus's appointment in half, and by September it stopped his salary completely. According to the faculty records, "he was a religious of the Fransiscan order, to whom it was not advantageous to lecture publicly on secular knowledge."[34]

---

[32] "Circa hunc articulum fuit commissum, ut scolares inantea providerent sibi de textibus, simul et baccalarii in lectiones, quoniam examinabuntur in eisdem, et fuere inchoati textus in examine quantum ad scolares scilicet. Posteriorum, Veteris artis, De anima et Phisicorum, quemadmodum publice in aula, cum decanus statua legit, fuit insinuatum, et fuerunt jam dicti textus in examine angarie penthecostes examinandis objecti." Lhotsky, *op. cit.*, 179.

---

[33] "In virgilia beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum fuit congregata facultas super quinto articulo: Ad audiendum petitionem domini Pauli poete, qui poeta protunc venit ad facultatem et alligavit, quod esset impossible, crudele et inhonestum, si deberet facere duas lecciones in die, scilicet unam facere paratus erat. Facultas artium suam petitionem non accepit, sed in suo proposito et dicto Superintendentis de duabus leccionibus permansit," Kink, op. cit., I, Part I, 196 has published a fragment of the proceedings, but Bauch, Die Reception des Humanismus in Wien, 34, 35 has published the complete records.

[34] "Erat enim religiosus de ordine Minorum, cui non multum expediebat, scientiam secularem publice legere," Bauch, ibid., 35.

After the departure of Amaltheus some of Celtis's friends attempted to obtain the Vienna lectureship for him. But Perger rejected their overtures and called on an Italian jurist, Giralamo Balbi, to fill the position. Balbi was a pretentious Venetian humanist with some law training who had taught at the University of Paris in the 1480's. After a feud with William Tardif, a French humanist, Balbi left Paris in 1491 and traveled through much of Europe before arriving in Vienna in 1493.[35] He lectured in the law faculty for a time, and displayed his poetic talents by writing laudatory verses to the Emperor and his important advisors. As a result of his blandishments, he soon received an appointment as lecturer on the humanities with a salary of fifty guldens; significantly he was to be paid by the government and had to give only one lecture a day.

Amaltheus might have been satisfied with the new salary and hours, but not Balbi. On July 4, 1494 he made several new demands to the faculty of arts. Most important, he asked that the faculty make his lectures on poetry and rhetoric obligatory for all students. Lectures on the humanities were still simply "electives," which were not required for degree candidates. Balbi also asked permission to charge a lecture fee, something not usually done by professors with a regular sàlary. And as the record of the arts faculty put it, he sought "several other unnecessary things."[36] The faculty postponed a decision, and then turned down all his requests, adding that they wanted first to hear the quality of his lectures. Apparently Balbi did not measure up to the faculty's standards. The report concluded by flatly stating, "How he lectured anyone knows who heard him."[37]

---

[35] P.S. Allen, "Hieronymous Balbus in Paris," English Historical Review, LXVII (1902), 417- 428; Augustin Renaudet, Prérèforme et Humanisme à Paris (Paris: Librairie d'Argennes, 1953), 121-124.

But his first setback did not discourage Balbi. As Amaltheus had done before him, Balbi took his case to the government officials in early 1495. His requests were the same; that his courses be required and subject to student fees. But the regents, who governed Austria while the Emperor was absent, chose not to push the faculty on these matters, and Balbi's requests were denied again. The deacon of the faculty admitted in his summary of the proceedings that "this response pleased the faculty very much."[38] After his second rebuff, Balbi continued to lecture, but with diminished enthusiasm. By 1496, he decided to stop his lectures entirely at the end of the academic year and restrict himself to lectures on law.

---

[36] "Tamen dominus Doctor per se ineadem congregacione proposuit publice, quomodo cum omni subjeccione et obtemperatione facultatis vellet prosequi leccionem poeticam sine exaccione et hora sibi signanda et libro facultati placenti, sed cupiebat a facultate, quod omnes baccalarii et scolares essent asstrici ad audiendam illam leccionem cum testimoniis habendis pro obtentione graduum cum aliquali pastu, ut decerneret facultas, et plura alia non necessaria." Bauch, op. cit., 45, 46.

[37] "Qualiter tamen legit, sciunt isti, qui audiverunt." ibid.

[38] "In quam supplicationem in dorso concluso et responsio dominorum Regencium scripta erat, scilicet: Non artentur ad

Celtis's friends again set to work to obtain the position for the German poet, who was then closing out his career at Ingolstadt. In February, 1497, Johannes Stabius wrote Celtis that he had many supporters at Vienna, but that Perger, the superintendent, favored calling in still another Italian, Francesco Bonomo.[39] But this time the backers of Celtis were successful. On March 7, 1497, Maximillian sent a letter to Celtis which offered him the position.

Celtis arrived in Vienna in the fall of 1497 and began lecturing on the usual humanist fare—Cicero, Horace and poetry—and perhaps some things not so usual—he edited a minor work of Nicholas of Cusa and the De mundo of Apuleius and may have lectured on both.[40] How was he received at the University? When he first arrived he had one minor dispute with the arts faculty over lecture hours.[41] The faculty

---

pastum scolares interim, quod habet stipendium pingwe a principe. Que responsio summe placuit facultati." ibid., 52.

[39] Celtis, Briefwechsel, 251.

[40] The poems he wrote to announce his courses give the subjects of Celtis's lectures, but give no hints to the date; none of the poems mentions Cusa or Apuleius. Fünf Bücher Epigramme, 102-104.

[41] The relevant section of the records of the arts faculty

became upset when Celtis chose three o'clock for his courses —a time which conflicted with lectures for some of the required subjects. Celtis at first refused to give in on the issue, and like his humanist predecessors, appealed to the government. But he finally yielded, and the deacon of the arts faculty recorded with satisfaction, "Thus was preserved the normal custom of the faculty."[42]

During Celtis's second year at Vienna the superintendent and the regents attempted another reform of teaching in the faculty of arts. Their proposals in 1492, though moderate, had been only partially approved. Renewed efforts began in May 1499, when three regents, Johannes Fuchsman, Lenhard von Hanach and Wolfgang Gwerlich, announced at a meeting of the faculty of arts that certain changes were highly desirable in their teaching methods.[43] As the deacon stated it in his report,

> . . .they urged and desired for the higher fame and usefulness of the whole university that the scholars and bachelors of the faculty of arts might be instructed more habitually in the textual and original truths of some famed teachers and authors, not in those sophisms, now worn out for a long time, or similarly in those rather vulgar concepts, where almost nothing

---

are printed by E. Klüpfel, De vita et scriptis Conrodi Celtis Protucii (Freiburg: 1827), I, 191.

[42] "Sic saluabatur consuetudo nostre facultatis." ibid.

[43] Relevant documents in Bauch, op. cit., 95-98.

original is contained, but rather pale knowledge.[44] The regents also proposed "many other things," but the deacon "resolved not to relate them in writing." He added, "So as not to appear to speak against his royal majesty," the faculty should agree to appoint a deputation to meet the regents to discuss reforms.

The two groups met during the early summer, and on August 8, 1499, the members of the arts faculty convened to hear their proposals. Most important, attendance at humanist lectures was to become required for both the Bachelor's and Master's degrees. The faculty records stated that the Emperor had "most graciously ordered and instituted lectures in the studia humanitatis" and it did not want to appear ungrateful. Therefore each beginning student had to attend these lectures for a half a year, each bachelor, for a quarter of a year. Celtis was not mentioned, but undoubtedly his lectures were the ones involved. A second proposal "for the increment of our students," would have required each scholar to study Vergil's Bucolics and "a book on letter writing," and each bachelor to study Vergil's Aeneid. These courses were separate from the formal humanist lectures and were to be given by "one of our own masters," rather than a resident poet like Celtis.

---

[44] "Sed ut brevius intentionem ipsorum absolvam, hortabantur et desiderarunt pro uberiori fama et utilitate tocius universitatis, ut scholares et facultatis arcium Waccalaurei plus solito in veris originalibus et textualibus alicuius doctoris et autoris famati non in illis jam diu attritis sophismatibus, conceptis item nonnullis vulgaribus, ubi penitus nulla originalis, sed pocius paleata scientia continetur, imbuerentur." ibid., 95.

Two of the reforms dealt with elementary training in grammar and rhetoric. The use of the Summula Jovis, a thirteenth-century versified manual on composition, was discontinued, to be supplanted by a "more useful book" on letter writing. The second proposal interdicted the use of the first two parts of the Doctrinale by Alexander de Villedieu and recommended instead the grammar of Nicolas Perotti. It is possible that "Perotti's grammar" was actually Perger's Nova grammatica, a re-working of Perotti.

The final two proposals dealt with scholastic subjects themselves rather than with humanist innovations. One demanded the formation of a committee to decrease the large number of authorities and commentators used as texts in the faculty of arts. The committee was to collect the "scattered books" of the via moderna, "improve and correct them, bring them together into one book or course, and then let them be printed for the special use and benefit of the university." Until this was done, arts instruction was to be uniformly based on Thomas Bricot, a fifteenth-century Parisian nominalist who wrote a complete series of Aristotelian commentaries. Finally provision was made for the acquisition of a special house or burse for students in the via antiqua.

How were the reform proposals received? According to the faculty records they were "accepted and approved" at the very meeting at which they were introduced.[45] Gustav Bauch has argued, however, that the reforms never became official policy because the University Council never gave them final approval.[46] Although this was pure conjecture on Bauch's part, there is substantial evidence to support his suspicions that the reforms were never carried through. There is no record, for example, of the acquisition of a realist _burse_; no special compendium of nominalist doctrine and no books by Bricot were published at Vienna in this period.[47] Perotti's grammar was almost certainly not put to immediate use. Reform statutes from the early sixteenth century again had to require the use of Perotti instead of the first two parts of the _Doctrinale_.[48] The lectures on Vergil may or may not have been instituted. If they were, however, it is difficult to explain the speech given by the arts faculty deacon in July 1501, asking "if there was a way of instructing our scholars in more useful teaching and humane letters, and not the other squalid, rough, unsuitable things, by which their most excellent minds are imbued and oppressed."[49]

---

[45] ". . .et articuli aubscripti per facultatem sunt conclusi, accepti et approbat," _ibid_., 96.

[46] _Ibid_., 102.

[47] Most printed editions of Bricot appeared at either Paris or Louvain; two of his logical commentaries were published at Basel, but they appeared in 1492. Panzer, _op. cit_., X (1802), 195; Hain, _op. cit_., I, 552, 553.

[48] Kink, _op. cit_., II, 315-318 has printed the statutes, though with the wrong date of 1509.

Were Celtis's lectures ever made mandatory for all students? Unfortunately Celtis's own letters from the period have been lost, so it is impossible to tell if the humanist himself wrote anything about the course of events. Significantly, none of Celtis's correspondents congratulated him or commented in any way about his lectures becoming mandatory. In fact the very opposite is true. In the early months of 1500, soon after the government-sponsored reforms had been "approved," three letters speak of growing conflict between Celtis and the University. In January a Rostock jurist, Christop Kuppner, wrote that he had heard rumors of attacks on Celtis, but that the poet "in

> in the presence of the regents so refuted the religious and certain antiquarians of the University of Vienna, dialecticians and Alexandrine philosophers, that you covered over the mouths of all those and their defamation against the poets. [50]

On March 23 his Nuremberg friend Sebald Schreyer expressed his sorrow that "that Stoic set is considerably set against you."[51] And in mid-April, Hieronymous von Coaria wrote from

---

[49] "In festo dive Marie Magdalene convocatis per juramentum Magistris de facultate artium de singulis ad deliberandum, si quis modus instituendi scholares nostros salubrioribus doctrinia et litteris humanioribus, aliis squalidis, incultis ac ineptis, quibus prestantissima ipsorum ingenia imbuebantur atque onerabantur, resectis, amplectendus foret." Bauch, op. cit., 104.

[50] Celtis, Briefwechsel, 384.

[51] Ibid., 392.

Ingolstadt that he had heard of a conflict between Celtis and the arts faculty, with the regents and "all honorable and upright" men on the poet's side.[52] None of the letters is specific about the cause of Celtis's trouble; nor is there any information in University documents. But it is significant that these three letters, the only ones to mention conflict during Celtis's ten years at Vienna, came in the wake of the reform attempt. It is possible, at least, that the "conflict" meant an attempt on the part of some masters to prevent Celtis's courses from being made required.

Another possible indication of the reaction against government interference was Bernard Perger's departure from office in 1500, apparently under a good deal of criticism from the University.[53] His replacement, Johannes Cuspianus, though interested himself in humanism, lacked Perger's agressiveness.

The seemingly mediocre results of the 1499 reforms may have set Celtis to thinking about a new kind of institution for promotion of humanist studies at Vienna. The institution he had in mind—a special Poets' College—was to be connected with the University but not formally tied to the arts faculty. He presented the Emperor a sketch of his proposals in the spring of 1501, and in the fall he received the charter for the founding of the College.[54] The charter stated that the Emperor, always thinking of the honor of Germany and the Austrian homeland, thought it wise to found a school of Roman literature, "from whence would result so many excellent leaders and statesmen of the republic." It continued:

---

[52] Ibid., 397.

[53] Aschbach, op. cit., I, 60; Kink, op. cit., I, 195.

> Therefore by our arrangements, in the manner of our imperial forebearers, we have directed the foundation of a college of poets at our school in Vienna, to restore the lost eloquence of the previous age, since till now we have done nothing for the poetic and rhetorical arts.

The make-up of the college reflected Celtis's educational ideals. Of the four professors, two taught "eloquence"—poetry and rhetoric—and two taught "wisdom"—mathematics and astronomy. The number of students was to remain small. On completion of their course of study, they did not receive a diploma, but instead became eligible to receive the poet's laurel crown from the Emperor. And it was the Emperor who paid the professors and the rent on the house which Celtis acquired for the College's use.

The career of Celtis's brainchild was neither long nor distinguished.[55] It opened in February 1502, but with only three quarters of the proposed faculty. Celtis and his friend Vinzenz Lang taught poetry, and Andreas Stiborius was the lone mathematician. The only information about the school's activity comes from the publication in 1505 of Celtis's Rhapsodia, a play performed by his students in honor of Maximillian. In the introductory letter Celtis explained that his goal was to produce a student both learned and eloquent. He added that he gave lessons on the best authors and required the students to give declamations and perform plays. Nothing was said about the lectures on mathematics.

---

[54] Celtis, Briefwechsel, 456-460.

[55] Spitz, Conrad Celtis, 69-71.

The presentation of the Rhapsodia in 1504 was the high point of the Poets College. Shortly before, Celtis's colleague, Lang, had died and was not replaced. Celtis, who himself was dying of syphillis, carried on alone for a time, but when he died in 1508, the College seems to have shut down entirely. In his final testament, Celtis did not once mention his creation.[56]

Although Celtis would never have admitted it, the foundation of the Poets College meant a setback for the progress of humanist reform at Vienna.[57] Having failed to attain a permanent place in the arts curriculum, rhetoric, poetry and mathematics were relegated to a special institution separate from the University itself. Perger and the humanist reformers had gone too far and too fast even for the University of Vienna. Their attempt to force reform on the academic corporation caused a reaction both to government interference and the humanism they espoused. After a revision of arts statutes in 1504, which incorporated a few of the 1499 proposals, the tempo of humanist advance markedly slowed down. Only in the 1520's after a number of schools had already done so successfully, would the government attempt another reform of studies at Vienna.[58]

---

[56] Celtis, Briefwechsel, 603-609.

[57] "In dieser Gründung liegt eine Verurteilung der bestehenden Ordnung der Universität und der Verzicht auf den Versuch einer tiefergreifenden Reform." Kaufmann, op. cit., II, 547.

Thus in the closing years of the fifteenth century the humanists failed to achieve the changes in university education they hoped for. They had convinced a few men in government and academic life that late scholastic education was deficient in certain areas. But most university teachers felt no urgency to upset the traditional practices they had always known.

---

[58] On these reforms, see Chapter IX.

CHAPTER V

HUMANISM AND THEOLOGY IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Humanist polemics against scholasticism in the early sixteenth century shared much in common with those of the 1480's and 1490's. The humanists continued to write new grammar manuals which attacked the barbarisms of Alexander Villedieu and the modi significandi. They continued to compose handbooks on rhetoric and poetry which praised the benefits of eloquence. They continued to deliver academic orations which attacked dialectic and extolled an education based on classical literature. Little would be gained by reexamining the content of these old criticisms. The arguments were repetitive and the authorities cited have by now become familiar.

But humanist thought around 1500 was also undergoing an important and perceptible change. In Germany and elsewhere in northern Europe, the great figures in the humanist movement were increasingly being drawn to questions touching on religious life and thought. One need only think of men like Thomas More in England, Jacques Lèfevre in France and, of course, standing above all the others, the great Erasmus. The new religious orientation of these and other men brought a new dimension to the humanist critique of the schoolmen. Previous humanists had held back from attacking the scholastic theologians and had concentrated their energy on reforming the scholasticism of the arts course. After 1500 scholastic theology lost its immunity.

To illustrate these changes in German humanism, this chapter will examine the attitudes toward scholasticism held by four men—Conrad Mutian, Willibald Pirckheimer, Heinrich Bebel and Johannes Reuchlin. Why these four? First, these men were the most highly reputed humanists whose literary activity fell mainly after 1500. Second, their attitudes give a fair sampling of the various approaches to improving scholastic theology. All four criticized the theologians, but they did so for different reasons and with different points of emphasis.

Of all the humanists after 1500, Conrad Mutian, the leading Erfurt humanist, made the most radical departure from earlier traditions. Convinced that the scholastics had utterly corrupted Christian thought, he believed that the grammatical reforms envisioned by Wimpheling and other early humanists were only inadequate first steps in its revitalization. He totally rejected prevailing methods and called for a return to the pristine sources of ancient philosophy and theology. His search for intellectual revival took him away from the

Ciceronianism of Petrarch and the rhetorical humanists and attracted him to the Platonism of Pico, Ficino and the speculative humanists.

Mutian's life was simple and uncluttered.[1] Born of a prosperous Homberg family in 1471, he received his first schooling locally; then at ten he entered the famous school of the Brethren of the Common Life at Deventer. After five years with the Brethren, he studied scholastic philosophy at the University of Erfurt, where by his own account, he heard the lectures of Conrad Celtis.[2] After receiving his Master of Arts in 1492, he stayed on at Erfurt for two years as a teacher in the arts course. What he taught is not certain, but elementary grammar and logic were the usual courses handled by new magistri. In 1495 he left Erfurt for Italy. He went there to study law, and in 1498 he received a law degree from the University of Bologna. But other elements in the Italian intellectual climate excited him more than law. After 1498 he traveled through Italy and studied classical literature and Platonic philosophy. When he returned to Germany in 1502, he worked in the Hessian Chancellery for what must have been a very brief period. In 1503 he gave up his position and entered the Chapter of Mary of Gotha, where he spent the rest of his life. Venturing forth only for an occasional trip to Erfurt, he devoted his days to his studies and his God.

---

[1] Mutian has yet to receive the sound scholarly treatment he deserves; the best analysis of his religious ideas is the essay by Lewis Spitz, "Mutian, Intellectual Canon," The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, 130-155; Fritz Halbauer, Mutianus Rufus und seine geistesgeschichtliche Stellung (Leipzig: Teubner, 1929) is unreadable and next to worthless; Mutian's large correspondence has been collected by Carl Krause, Der Briefwechsel des Mutianus Rufus (Kassel: A. Fregeschmidt, 1885).

[2] Mutian, Briefwechsel, 655.

A priest living among other priests, Mutian was a violent critic of clerical sloth, avarice and immorality. In 1508 he complained that "whores and filthy harlots devoured the better part of the church's patrimony," and added that "to the pure and innocent no gifts at all are payed out."[3] Priestly gluttony and drunkenness thoroughly disgusted him. He was no teetotaler himself, and admitted writing at least two letters while bene inebrius.[4] But when two fellow canons appeared in public in a similar state, he wrote a long and angry letter to his friend Heinrich Urban denouncing their actions in the harshest language.[5] As for the morality of of his colleagues, he felt that castration might be the only cure.[6] Fasting and dietary regulations also seemed total nonsense to the Gotha canon. When Lent arrived, at least one of his letters would predictably refer to the "stupid people who devour radishes and moldy fish."[7] Like Erasmus, Mutian must have had a sensitive stomach.

---

[3] "At aevo nostro squalida scorta foedae pelliculae meliorem partem ecclesiastici patrimonii devorant. Castis et innocentibus nullae stipes erogantur." ibid., 101.

[4] Ibid., 445, 621.

[5] Ibid., 103.

[6] Ibid., 105.

For all his anxiety about the low state of the Church, Mutian reserved his harshest language for the detractors of good learning. Occasionally he enthusiastically expressed the opinion that men were finally freeing themselves from ignorance and entering a golden age.[8] But such optimism was rare, and most of his letters conveyed an entirely different mood. For all his bold mockery of monkish ignorance and scholastic obscurity, Mutian, like many of his fellow humanists, was always conscious of the weakness and impotence of humanism. Even before the difficulties of the Ruechlin affair, he never resolved his fear that the forces of darkness might move in at any moment and snuff out the advances which he and like-minded men had made.

These forces of darkness had two strongholds; among the priests and among the scholastics. From his first arrival in Gotha, his letters were filled with complaints about his difficulties with the ignorant clerics surrounding him. None of them, he complained, had any sympathy for his reading of the poets and ancient philosophers:

---

[7] Ibid., 295.

[8] See letter to Urban, Fall 1505, Ibid., 21.

> Barbarians, proud and contentious, prevail among the barbarians, and those who should especially revere and respect me give vent to their anger. Yesterday abusive, threatening and bitter words flared up. There is little chance that they might pride themselves in Mutian; they already want me to be far away from them 9

But scholasticism was by far the greater barrier to good learning. On occasion Mutian seemed encouraged with the progress of humanist studies at the universities. In 1509, for example, he exulted that "the young masters at Erfurt were freeing themselves from barbarism;"[10] six years later he wrote the rector of the University that whether he liked it or not, "cultured men" were increasing at his school.[11] But favorable comments such as these were infrequent, and in general, his attitude toward scholastic theology and philosophy was totally negative. Attacks on the universities were especially common in 1509, the year his friend and correspondent, Heinrich Urban began work on his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Leipzig. Mutian felt it

---

[9] "Valeant barbari inter barbaros superbientes et contentiosi, qui michi, quem unice vereri et colere deberent, stomachum faciunt. Cottidie gliscunt sermones contumeliosi, minaces, acerbi. Tantum abest ut Mutiano concanonico glorientur, ut etiam me longius abesse cupiant." ibid., 19.

[10] Ibid., 113.

[11] Noted by Krause in Mutian, Briefwechsel, 642. Full text in Wilhelm Tentzel, ed., Supplementum Historiae Gothanae, I (Jena: Joannis Bielckius, 1701), part 2, p. 15.

was tragic that a person like Urban, already introduced to good authors, had to go back to the menial arts course fare. He wrote Urban in October that he could never think of his case without breaking into tears;[12] he warned his friend that at the University he would have to forget every worthy thing he had learned. "These inept and arrogant men," he complained, "are accustomed to draw good talents away from straightforward studies and pull them off course to their distorted prison, just like so many blind donkeys."[13] Mutian continued:

> Why is this so? Encumbered by errors, overwhelmed with opinions, surrounded by darkness, they are not able to attain a notion of truth even if those old men cared to. But it is not for me to dispute against the barbarians. You will see to how great an extent lamentable ignorance and error holds them. [14]

In another letter he refused to discuss the lectures Urban had to attend, since that "kind of babbling offers inane shadows and reads through foolish absurdities."[15] At other times he urged his friend to privately study good authors and work on his Greek whenever he had time.[16]

---

[12] "Ego sine lacrimis non possum animo replicare tuum casum." Ibid., 118.

[13] Ibid., 117.

[14] "Et hoc quare? Ut impediti erroribus, opinionibus obruti, tenebris circumfusi non possint ad veri notionem, qua senes isti carent, pervinere. Non est mihi contra barbaros disputatio. Tu vides, quot sint quos miserabilis error et ignorantia teneat." ibid., 118.

[15] Ibid., 146, 147.

Mutian's attacks on the scholastic theologians were steeped in the same kind of rhetoric. These men he complained, ignored Greek and Hebrew, scorned the Church fathers and other good authors, closed their minds to any spirit of change, and in general were useless to the Church. In fact Mutian felt most of the inadequacies and faults of university education could be ascribed to the conservatism of the scholastic theologians. They maintained the status quo, and their prestige was such that others hesitated to oppose them. Referring to Erfurt in 1513, he lamented that "the apes of the theologians sieze the whole school, forcing upon the students the *figuras* of Donatus, very obscure affairs, figures of the *parva logicalia*, pure nonsense, all kinds of exercises and other foolish matters."[17]

What alternatives did Mutian suggest to the scholastic practices he scorned? In 1513 he jokingly wrote Urban about his conception of a good university:

> It would be enough, . . .if there were one sophist, two mathematicians, three theologians, four jurists, five physicians, six orators, seven Hebraists, eight Graecists, nine grammarians and ten right-minded philosophers. 18

---

[16] *Ibid.*, 135.

[17] "Hodie theologorum simiae totam occupant scholam inculcantes discipulis figuras Parvuli, mera deliramenta, exercitamenta multijuga, gerras Siculas." *Ibid.*, 331.

[18] *Ibid.*, 331.

Perhaps this was another letter which Mutian wrote while *bene inebrius*; even if this was the case, in certain respects it faithfully reflects his intellectual position.

The low rank accorded to dialectic, for example, (one sophist on a faculty of fifty-five!) clearly shows Mutians's disdain for scholastic logicians. At times he rejected scholastic logic entirely, dismissing it as a method for twisting arguments to support any kind of preposterous proposition. In a letter from 1506, he complained to Urban about the stupidity of the modern philosophers who had no concern for writing good Latin, but who were "well-instructed in raillery and fallacies." With their syllogizing, he complained, they defended any argument, no matter how foolish. He cited several examples:

> The apostles of God are twelve; Peter and Paul are apostles of God, therefore Peter and Paul are twelve. Furthermore: God is everywhere, i.e., in every place. The sewer is a place. Therefore, God is in the sewer. [19]

In fairness to Mutian, he had studied scholastic logic at Erfurt and knew that the set of arguments he concocted were not true examples of medieval dialectic. At other times he took a more moderate position on the usefulness of logic. In 1514, for example, he quoted the French humanist Jacques Lefèvre to defend the position that logic was necessary for rational discourse, but that the medieval logicians had made the discipline

---

[19] *Ibid.*, 67.

"insolent and fruitless." As a result, Mutian continued, natural and rational philosophy, mathematics and theology all suffered. In the same letter he went on to attack the numerous compendiums on scholastic logic, specifically the Epitome dialecticae, written in 1512 by the Erfurt nominalist, Jodocus Trutfetter. To Mutian it was sufficient for a true philosopher to learn logic by reading Aristotle himself. By their long commentaries, men like Trutfetter only turned "gems into pickles." In Mutian's opinion, logic was worthwhile only if studied in moderation, and from the original sources.[20]

Compared to logic, the other two trivium subjects had a more prestigious status at Mutian's ideal university; his school was to have six orators and nine grammarians. Mutian no doubt approved the attempts of Celtis and others to improve grammar teaching and bring poetry and rhetoric to the German universities. In 1510, for example, he berated a Benedictine monk, who had argued that "the poets are ruining the university."[21] And he would occasionally discourse at length about the incorrect Latin found in many medieval writings. But Mutian was different from the rhetorical and poetical humanists who had dominated the previous generation. He took little pride in his meager stylistic gifts and frankly admitted that "in me there is certainly nothing of Cicero."[22] He reacted vigorously when anyone called him a "mere poet."[23]

---

[20] Ibid., 444, 445.

[21] Ibid., 212.

Mutian's attitude toward poetry was in many ways similar to Wimpheling's. Mutian felt there was nothing more ludicrous than the wordy pride of men who fashioned themselves as "poets." In 1506 he wrote about the visit of three such men:

> What can I say about inept poets? Three of them came to me. Which of them was more boastful I cannot express in words. One is a noxious thief and plagiarizer of Ovid, the second a barbarian babbler, the third a little man with such a really dull mind, that no one knows what he says besides himself. They set before me four badly-written and ridiculous verses, which I certainly advise to be published. All are bad imitators and like leeches sucking bad blood, leave behind the good in the poets. They have read like a small boy and searched in the books of collections, but they found lumps of coal and not treasures. But I am neither a public censor, nor the preceptor of any man. [24]

Like Wimpheling, Mutian's favorite poet was Baptista Mantuanus, the Italian Carmelite, who composed verses on pious themes.[25] Again like Wimpheling, he feared the damage poetry might do to morals. He advised that young boys should read only "chaste poets," the clergy none at all.[26] To support this view he quoted the famous passage from Jerome, "What has Horace to do with the Psalms, Vergil with the Gospels, Cicero with the apostles?"

---

[22] _Ibid._, 212.

[23] _Ibid._, 52, 276.

[24] "Quid dicam de poetis ineptis? Tres ad me veniunt. Quis eorum vaniloquentior sit, verbis exprimere nequeo. Unus pestilens fur est et plagiarius Ovidii, secundus barbarus blaterator, tertius ita hebetis animi homuncio, ut quid dicat nemo praeter se ipsum intelligat. Ponit in fronte libri quatuor male literatos et ridiculos versus, quos equidem luminis egere censeo. Omnes isti cacozeli sunt et quasi hirudines sugentes malum sanguinem, bonum in poetis relinquunt. Legerunt puto et thesarum quaesiverunt in libris, sed carbones, ut dicitur, non thesaurum invenerunt, prorsus illepidi, rudes, loquaces. Non sum publicus censor, nullius hominis praeceptor." _ibid._, 33.

If Mutian declined the titles of "poet" and "Ciceronian," he never complained when someone called him a "philosopher." His ideal university was a school of philosophy more than anything else; it included ten "right-minded philosophers" and a supporting cast of fifteen—eight Graecists and seven Hebraists. It included only three theologians, but Mutian's philosophers would no doubt have been expected to teach and study the workings of God.

Mutian never produced a well-constructed metaphysical synthesis. His philosophizing was tucked away in paragraphs scattered throughout his letters. But all these scraps show his constant interest in the Neo-Platonism of the speculative humanists of late fifteenth-century Italy. He often expressed his interest in Ficino, and spoke of Pico with the highest ~~a~~ admiration. He was "a divine man among the most noble, a great miracle among the most learned of his age."[27] And when Mutian wrote Reuchlin for the first time, he could think of no finer compliment than to say he was carrying on the work of the great Pico.[28] In the case of the two Italian Neo-Platonists, their interest in speculative philosophy somewhat softened their attitude toward scholasticism; nothing similar seems to have taken place with Mutian.

---

[25] Ibid., 52.

[26] "Ego sic decerno: Legendos esse in aetate prima pudicos poetas, sacerdoti nullo modo legendos." ibid., 189.

All of Mutian's bold attacks on scholastic philosophy and theology were limited to his private correspondence. He never publicly attacked the scholastics and he strongly disapproved when others did so. He felt it was especially repugnant to see a "mere poet" attacking the theologians. In a probable reference to the conflict between Jacob Locher and Georg Zingl,[29] he wrote in 1510 that he could "hardly stand" the stupidity of the crowned poets who felt they were lovers of eternal truth. These men, he complained, attacked the theologians and did not believe in the sacred scriptures. They said good things badly and judged bad thing good.[30] He expressed similar sentiments in 1513 when a young humanist, Tillman Conradi, attacked the scholastics at Erfurt. He wrote Urban that it was wrong to attack "holy masters and the affairs of philosophy just for personal greatness and grandeur." Although the sophists offered little that was valuable for Christian living, they were wise at "solving perplexities and questions, in confirming truth and refuting error."[31] Even during the Reuchlin affair, he strongly disapproved the harsh language which Reuchlin used against his opponents.

---

[27] ". . .esset inter nobilissimos divinus hono, inter doctissimos aetatis suae magnum miraculum." ibid., 174.

[28] Ludwig Geiger, ed., Johann Reuchlins Briefwechsel (Tübingen: L. Fr. Fues, 1875), 84.

[29] On this conflict, see Ch. VI.

[30] "Culpant theologos, sacris literis non credunt viventes perditissime. Suo pari maledicto subjecere, qui bona mala dicunt, et illos qui mala bona judicunt, qui faciunt amarum dulce et dulce amarum." Mutian, Briefwechsel, 189.

The reason for Mutian's reticence about attacking the scholastics also explains his failure to publish a single book during his life. He once defended his aversion to publishing by citing the examples of Socrates and Christ, who of course had never written anything themselves.[32] But the real reason lay in Mutian's conviction that it was dangerous for the common people to hear radical philosophizing and criticisms of traditional practices. It was completely acceptable for Mutian and his learned friends to privately jest about the ignorant priests and the dull-witted scholastic theologians, but to publicly express these thoughts would confuse the people and weaken the Church. He wrote in 1505, "we know in fact that mysteries must not be popularized, but are to be suppressed in silence or else treated under the coverings of fables or riddles, nor should pearls be thrown to pigs."[33]

---

[31] *Ibid.*, 328.

[32] *Ibid.*, 112.

In his attitudes about humanism's role in reforming the scholastic universities, Mutian was a thinker rather than a doer, a visionary rather than a reformer. He loved his tranquility and solitude; he longed for reform, but utilized neither the pulpit, the printed page nor the lecture room for the advancement of his ideas. His influence on other thinkers, which was considerable, resulted entirely from letters and personal contacts. His significance lay in the fact that he was one of the first men in Germany to go beyond the grammatical and rhetorical interests of the early humanists; he looked to humanism not for a reform of Latin speech, but for a renewal of Christian philosophy and theology. Hesitant in his recommendation of classical poets, he was convinced that only a recovery of the ancient pia philosophia could vivify what he considered the dreadful sterility of late scholasticism.

The thought and career of Willibald Pirckheimer offers another example of the change in humanist polemics against scholasticism in the early sixteenth century. Like Mutian, Pirckheimer did not limit his criticisms of scholasticism to deriding the schoolmen's barbaric Latin and lack of eloquence. He too believed that more extensive reforms were needed if philosophy and theology were to be truly revitalized.

---

[33] Scimus enim mysteria non esse vulganda, sed esse vel supprimenda silentio vel per quaedam fabularum atque aenigmatum tradenda, ne suibus demus margaritas." ibid., 13.

Pirckheimer was the only German humanist to receive no formal education at a northern European university.[34] Born into a wealthy Nuremberg family, he received his early education from private tutors. His interest in humanism can be traced back to the influence of his father, Johann. The elder Pirckheimer bequeathed to his son an interest in classical literature which he himself had acquired while studying law in Italy in the 1460's. In 1488, at the age of eighteen, Willibald followed his father's footsteps to Padua to begin law studies at the University. But like Agricola and Mutian, Pirckheimer found jurisprudence less attractive than literature and philosophy. Between 1488 and 1491 he not only studied law, but also learned Greek and studied Plato, Aristotle and scholastic theology. Later, while a student at Pavia between 1491 and 1495, he travelled through Italy and collected numerous classical manuscripts. Without having completed his legal studies, he cut short his formal education in 1495 and returned to Nuremberg. There he led the pleasant life of an independently wealthy patrician.

---

[34] Lewis Spitz, "Willibald Pirckheimer—Speculative Patrician," The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists, 155-197; Friedrich Roth, "Willibald Pirckheimer, ein Lebensbild," Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte, V (Halle: 1887, 1888); Hans Rupprich, "Willibald Pirckheymer, Beiträge zu einer Wesenserfassung," Schweizer Beiträge zur allgemeinen Geschichte, XV (1957), 54-110.

Pirckheimer was neither a poet like Celtis nor a pedagogical reformer like Wimpheling. He made his name as a careful student of Greek and as a skillful translator and editor. In all he translated over forty works from Greek to Latin or German. A quick glance at the titles shows the wide range of his intellectual interests. Among them were histories, plays, devotional pieces, scientific works, selections from the Church fathers and exerpts from Plato and Aristotle. No other German humanist equaled him in the extraordinary diversity of his thought.

Much of the rhetoric which Pirckheimer directed against the scholastic philosophers was purely conventional. For example, two letters he wrote in 1502 contained attacks which could have been written by any of the German humanists.[35] He called the schoolmen "worshipers of barbarian letters," who offered "young men straw, while spurning more sumptuous nourishment." He added that they deserved the name philopompi, since they were "deficient in true philosophy and ignorant of all the liberal arts." He criticized their "idle talk, sophistical argumentations and inane foolery." Finally, he attacked their morals: "If you investigate the life and customs of these men, it is necessary to censure and detest them."[36] Elsewhere he made typical humanist criticisms of the scholastics' inept Latin. In a letter to Johannes Cochlaeus, for example, he lamented their monotonous language and their "rough, uneven style."[37]

---

[35] Willibald Pirckheimer, Briefwechsel, I, ed. Emil Reicke, (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1940), 172, 178. The wording of both letters is identical in the parts on scholasticism.

Despite such general denunciations of scholasticism, Pirckheimer, like Celtis, did not completely reject everything the scholastics had done. Among the many volumes in his library, Pirckheimer owned Alexander Villedieu's Doctrinale, Peter Lombard's Sentences, several volumes by Aquinas and the complete works of Aristotle.[38] Such books did not simply gather dust. Some of his letters, for example, show a definite interest in speculative theology.[39] In 1496 he wrote a long letter to an unnamed correspondent about a problem relating to the Genesis story of creation—specifically, how light could have been created on the first day, if the stars and heavenly bodies were created only on the fourth. In his discussion Pirckheimer cited not only Augustine and several of the Greek Church fathers, but also Lombard's Sentences, Aquinas's Summa and Aquinas's commentary on Lombard. Twenty years later, he conceded that some study of Aquinas, Scotus and other speculative writers from the Middle Ages might be valuable for future theologians.[40]

---

[36] "Sivero vitam ac mores eorum inspicies, vituperes ac detesteris necesse est," ibid., 173.

[37] Pirckheimer, Briefwechsel, II, ed. Emil Reicke, (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1956), 246.

[38] Emile Offenbacher, "La Bibliotèque de Willibald Pirckheimer," La Bibliofilia, XL (1938), 241-263.

[39] Pirckheimer, Briefwechsel, I, 60-69.

Nor did Pirckheimer completely neglect Aristotle in favor of Plato. He did at times attack Aristotelian logic. In a letter from 1513, he deplored the corrupting influence on philosophy of the "unpleasantries of Aristotle" and the "impieties and blasphemies of Porphyry."[41] But Pirckheimer was a close student of Aristotle's writings on science and natural philosophy. After his return to Nuremberg, he urged his friend in Italy, Anton Kress, to keep him informed of new translations of Aristotle.[42] And when one of the Aristotelian works arrived with a missing page, he quickly wrote Kress in hope of getting a new copy.[43] He knew his Aristotle well, and frequently cited him when arguing disputed points.[44]

Thus Pirckheimer conceded that some of the concerns and achievements of scholastic philosophy and theology were of lasting value. What then did he specifically object to in their work? According to Pirckheimer, the schoolmen's greatest shortcoming lay in their teaching of moral philosophy. As a number of authors have pointed out, it was this concern with ethics and moral philosophy which gave unity to his seemingly aimless translating activity. With a few notable exceptions, such as his great edition of Ptolomy's Cosmography, most of his translations were of authors whose writings somehow related to the problems of daily living. Thus he concentrated on the works of Plutarch and Lucian and certain non-speculative Platonic works, such as Achiochus, De justo, and Num virtus doceri possit. Orators and Greek Church fathers attracted his interest because he believed they were adept at teaching the precepts of good behavior. He admired a rhetorician like Isocrates not only because of his eloquence, but also because his writings contained "very suitable admonitions and the holiest precepts, agreeing very much with the Christian religion."[45] He translated many works by Gregory Nazianus, the fourth-century Greek patriarch, in the hope his words would inspire men involved in teaching piety and virtue to the people.[46]

---

[40] See below, p. 199.

[41] ". . .si ingrati Aristotelis seu impii ac blasphemi illius Porphirii eis ablata fuerint instrumenta, penitus nudi et exarmati remaneant." Briefwechsel, II, 246.

[42] Pirckheimer, Briefwechsel, I, 180, 190.

[43] Ibid., I, 164.

[44] See his letter from around 1507 when he employed Aristotle to defend astrology. Ibid., I, 460-464.

---

[45] ". . .admonitiones saluberrimas praeciptaque sanctissima continentem ac christane religioni maxime congruentem." ibid., I, 200.

[46] See letters published in Willibald Pirckheimer Opera politica historica, philologica, Melchior Goldast, ed. (Frankfurt: Jacob Fischer, 1610), 231, 238-240.

In the introductory letter to his sister which he published with his translation of Plutarch's _De his, qui tarde a numine corripiuntur_, Pirckheimer described what he meant by true philosophy. He argued that true philosophy was a body of doctrine which taught virtue for daily life and offered consolation in times of trouble. It concerned those things "which securely and firmly lead men, wandering and drifting in this earthly sea, to the gate of highest felicity and immortality; also with those things which can mend the wounds suffered in human adversities and calamities."[47] He cited the Stoic precept that it was a gift of God that men lived, but a gift of philosophy that men lived well. He went on to assure his sister that if instructed in true philosophy, she could bear any injury or sorrow which fate might deal. In other words, Pirckheimer's conception of philosophy had little in common with the metaphysical and speculative interests of the scholastics. As Pirckheimer put it in the introductory letter, he had no use for "that sophistical and quibbling philosophy which is not able to lead to good and blessed living."[48]

---

[47] ". . .quae non solum homines, in hoc mundano errantes & fluctuantes salo, secure ac intrepide ad summae foelicitatis immortalitasque portum perducere queant, sed & adversitatibus humanis calamitatibus cunctis salubriter mederi valeant," _ibid_., II, 232.

[48] "Non de captiosa illa & cavillatrice loquor, quae nil aut parum ad bene beateque vivendum confect, . . ." _ibid_., II, 233.

Like most of the other German humanists after 1500, Pirckheimer also attacked the scholastic theologians. Like Mutian, he chided them for neglecting Plato and the Scriptures; like Bebel, he criticized their poor style and their ignorance of classical literature. But Pirckheimer's concern for ethics and good behavior sometimes gave his criticisms of scholastic theology a unique twist. In 1513, for example, when he wrote about the theologians in a letter to Johannes Cochlaeus, he devoted at least half the letter to the moral shortcomings of the schoolmen.[49] These men, Pirckheimer complained, "prided themselves on being imitators of Christ, our Lord and Saviour." But in their daily lives, he continued, they showed none of Christ's gentleness, clemency or patience. What a spectacle for the laymen to see the theologians eternally arguing among themselves and pursuing enemies with hatred and malice. He concluded that these men were so ignorant and evil that there was no way they could help the people lead good and pious lives.

Pirckheimer made his most thorough comment on the state of scholastic theology in 1517, in the midst of the Reuchlin affair. In that year he wrote a long letter on the subject which he published with his translation of Lucian's Piscator.[50]

---

[49] Ibid., II, 245-248.

[50] Willibald Pirckheimer, ed., Luciani Piscator sue Reviviscentes (Tübingen?: 1518).

In the first part of the letter he again criticized the schoolmen for their contentiousness and their rough treatment of Reuchlin. But Pirckheimer devoted most of the letter to a critique of the theologians' scholarship. In Pirckheimer's opinion, dialectic was to blame for most of theology's problems. He advanced the oft-heard humanist argument that dialectic was useful if studied in moderation.[51] But according to Pirckheimer, scholastic theologians spent so much time on logic that all kinds of evils resulted: the Old Testament was neglected, the New Testament was belittled as the work of an idiot, Jerome was condemned as a mere grammarian, and Augustine was damned for his ignorance.[52] In fact Pirckheimer claimed that if Augustine returned from the dead, he would have no idea what the scholastics were talking about; for he had known nothing of "_instantiae_, _relationes_, _ampliationes_, _restrictiones_, _formalitates_, _heccetiates_, _quidditates_, and those other kinds of monstrous names." Moslems and Hebrews, Pirckheimer continued, studied their sacred laws every day, but Christians found abstract speculation more exciting than the Scriptures. As a result, after years of study and contemplation all the Christian theologian can do is write commentaries on Donatus or Alexander Villedieu.

---

[51] "Proinde dialectices cognitionem, & theologis non indignam, & doctissimo ac optimo cuique ornamento esse existimo, dummodo syncera, & non depravata tradatur, dummodo tempore & modo intra suos terminos coherceatur, & non cum literis confundatur sacris, quoniam nullum consortium Christi & Belial, lucis & tenebrarum." _ibid_., b v.

[52] "Hinc est quod vetus testamentum a similibus negligitur, novum quasi Idiotis scriptum vilipenditur. . .hinc quod divus Hieronymus tanquam grammaticus contemnitur, beatus Augustinus etiam num ignorantiae damnatur. . . ." _ibid_.

Pirckheimer went on to outline what he considered a proper course of study for a theologian. First the theologian had to master the three scholarly languages: Latin, "so that he will not seem more a barbarian than a theologian;" Greek, "so he might be able to understand Aristotle and the other disciplines;" and Hebrew, "since in Hebrew letters all the mysteries of the Old and New Testament are hidden." Some dialectic was acceptable, but rhetoric was more important because of its usefulness for preaching. The theologian also had to know philosophy—"not only that which Aristotle has accurately set forth, but also that more divine philosophy in which most excellent Plato holds the honor."[53] He reminded the reader that Cicero had called Plato divine, that Augustine chose him as his guide and the "Latin and Greek fathers acknowledge as with one voice that Platonic theology agrees the most with Christian religion." Because of Plato's importance, the theologian must have skill in mathematics for "without geometry, arithmetic, music and astronomy Platonic philosophy cannot be completely learned." History was also demanded because it helped theologians understand the past and foretell the future; finally, a knowledge of civil and canon law was required so theologians would be better administrators.

---

[53] "Verum non solum ea, quam Aristoteles diligentissime prosecutus est, sed & divinior illa in qua sine controversia optimus Plato palmam obtinuit." ibid., b v iiii.

Did the study of scholastic theology have any role for Pirckheimer's ideal theologian? Pirckheimer approved the moderate study of "Saint Thomas, subtle Scotus and all the other writings of the speculative theologians." But according to Pirckheimer such studies held many dangers. He had seen how some men had "displayed the evangelical teachings of Christ by dialectic, the Old Testament by physics, the dogmas of the apostles by metaphysics and the writings of the pristine theologians by logic."

Finally, Pirckheimer again stressed that the most important thing a theologian could do was to make his own life an example of Christ's teaching. Good works and truthfulness were more important than erudition and mere talk. In this regard, a person could attain the peak of theology without knowing anything about pagan literature, Plato or Aristotle. The most important thing was to substitute "humility for pride, calmness for contentiousness, charity for hatred, and virtue for moral fault."

To briefly summarize: although Pirckheimer criticized scholasticism in general terms, his interests in speculative theology and philosophy drew him to the writings of certain scholastics such as Aquinas and Lombard. He had no desire to purge the schools of scholastic theology and courses on logic and metaphysics. He agreed with Mutian, however, that scholastic philosophizing could be improved if the universities taught Plato, Greek and Hebrew. Pirckheimer also criticized the scholastics for neglecting the religious needs of the Christian layman. To the Nuremberg patrician, the best theologian was not only a metaphysician, but also an inspiring teacher and a model of piety for the common people.

As many historians have pointed out, it is ironic that Johannes Reuchlin was the humanist who provoked the wrath of the Cologne theologians and lent his name to the controversy which most critics have viewed as the classic confrontation between humanism and scholasticism. During most of his life Reuchlin's criticisms of scholasticism were mild and infrequent. He did have definite ideas for the improvement of scholastic theology, but he offered his suggestions in a spirit of humility and honest piety.

Reuchlin was by training a lawyer, who had an active career in government as a jurist, councillor and diplomat.[54] Northern universities provided his formal education, if not the inspiration for his scholarship. In 1470, at the age of fifteen, he began his university training at Freiburg-im-Breisgau; he later studied at Paris, and finally received his Bachelor of Arts from Basel in 1478. He then returned to France, studied briefly at Paris and finally received his law degree from the University of Poitiers in 1484.

---

[54] Reuchlin scholarship still rests on the pioneering work by the nineteenth-century German scholar, Ludwig Geiger,

His contemporaries considered Reuchlin the most learned German of his age. Although others talked bravely of learning the three scholarly languages—Greek, Hebrew and Latin—Reuchlin was one of the rare individuals who mastered all three tongues. Actually his accomplishments as a Latinist were unspectacular. Occasionally he boasted of having studied grammar and rhetoric at Paris under Roaber Gaguin and William Tardif,[55] but he took little pride or interest in his own Latin style. In the opinion of Erasmus, he was "a great man, but his speech is redolent of his age, which was still somewhat rough and

---

Johann Reuchlin, sein Leben und seine Werke (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1871). Max Brod, Johannes Reuchlin und sein Kampf (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1965) adds little new information, but his interpretations are often sounder than Geiger's; Manfred Krebs, ed., Johannes Reuchlin 1455-1522. Festgabe seiner Vaterstadt Pforzheim zur 500. Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages (Pforzheim: Selbstverlag der Stadt, 1955) is a good collection of essays, especially Hans Rupprich, "Johannes, Reuchlin und seine Bedeutung im europäischen Humanismus," Reuchlin's letters have been printed in Johann Reuchlins Briefwechsel, ed. Ludwig Geiger (Tübingen: Fues, 1875), also in Adalbert Horawity, ed., Zur Biographie und Correspondenz Johannes Reuchlins (Vienna: Adolf Holzhausen, 1877).

[55] Reuchlin, Briefwechsel, 199.

unpolished."[56] Erasmus had no such reservations about Reuchlin's proficiency in Greek. Reuchlin learned the rudiments of the language during his early student days at Paris and polished his skills through independent study. He used the language mainly as a tool to aid his theological and philosophical investigations. He translated some minor works from Greek to Latin, publishing only a few while most remained in manuscript for circulation among friends.[57]

It was above all as a student of Hebrew that Reuchlin secured his reputation as a great scholar. And it was Hebrew which aroused the greatest enthusiasm in Reuchlin. In De verbo mirifico he defended Hebrew against the "barbarians" who did not consider it a worthy tongue. He admitted it did not have much elegance or grace, but he asserted "its speech is simple, pure, uncorrupted, holy, brief and consistent, the language by which God speaks to men and men with angels."[58]

---

[56] Erasmus, Ciceronianus, English translation by Izora Scott, Controversies over the Imitation of Cicero (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), 107.

[57] For Reuchlin's Greek scholarship see Geiger, Reuchlin, 92-102.

[58] "Barbara vero dicuntur, hebraica vel proxime inde derivata. Flosculi namque sermonis & venustas elegantiarum post Hebrum & linguarum distinctionem a curiosis potius quam sinceris hominibus est excogitata. Simplex autem sermo, purus, incorruptus, sanctus, brevis & constans Hebraeorum est, quo deus cum homine, & homines cum angelis locuti. . . ." De verbo mirifico (Basel: 1494), C 5 b. (facsimile reprint, Stuttgart; Frommann, 1964).

Later in his career, he likened the reading of Hebrew to a true religious experience. In a letter to his friend Nicholas Ellenbog, he wrote that he had studied many languages, but none brought him closer to God than Hebrew:

> Always in fact, while reading Hebrew, I seem to see God himself speaking, for I know this was the language in which God and the angels described their merits to men. [59]

This experience, he continued, filled him with both terror and ineffable joy.

Reuchlin's most lasting achievement as a Hebrew scholar was to lay the groundwork for further Hebrew studies by writing two fundamental works on Hebrew grammar. In 1506 he published his lengthy De rudimentis hebraicis along with an edition of several Psalms to be used as a study aid. Then twelve years later he published a more specialized work on pronunciation, De accentibus et orthographia linguae hebraicae. More fascinating to Reuchlin himself was his work on the Cabala, that esoteric body of Hebrew mysticism dating from around 1200. The Italian philosopher, Pico della Mirandola, whom Reuchlin met twice on trips to Italy, was the inspiration for this aspect of Reuchlin's work. Both men were attracted to the Cabala because of its close affinity to certain Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic doctrines such as contemplation, hierarchy, emanation and spiritualism. Both were convinced that when properly studied, the Cabala not only confirmed important Christian truths, but also unlocked mysteries of the Bible and the whole universe. The key to its use was knowledge of the special qualities of Hebrew words and letters, which to the Cabalist had symbolic meanings and magical powers.[60] Reuchlin wrote two long and difficult works on the Cabala—De verbo mirifico, 1494, and De arte caballistica, 1518.

---

[59] ". . .post variarum lectionum experimenta nihil ex omnibus linguis quas didici plus me deo conjungit quam sacrarum literarum hebraica exercitatio. Semper enim legendo hebraice videor mihi videre deum ipsum loquentem, cum cogito eam esse linguam qua Deus et angeli commeli commerita sua sint hominibus divinitus exequicte: Et sic horrore quodam et terrore concutior non sine quodam gaudio ineffabili. . . ." Briefwechsel, 123.

Before the outbreak of the conflict with the Cologne theologians, Reuchlin was no harsh critic of scholasticism. A lawyer rather than a university professor, he had little interest in improving Latin teaching or in forging a place for classical literature in the scholastic curriculum. And he was enough of a realist to know that the arcane wisdom of the Cabala would never be a suitable subject for university students. In fact he seems to have admired the writings of some scholastics. Like many German humanists, he occasionally praised Albertus Magnus, and he dedicated one of his Greek translations to his realist teacher at Paris and Basel, Johann

---

[60] F. Secret, Les kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance (Paris: Dunod, 1964). On the Cabala see above and G.G. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (Jerusalem, 1941).

Heynlin von Stein.[61] He was well-acquainted with Aristotle, and in one work he even adopted the formal scholastic method of argumentation. While defending Hebrew writings in the Augenspiegel (1512) he set forth fifty two propositions, gave the pros and cons on each point and finally presented his own solution. He himself called it "arguments in the scholastic mode."[62]

Occasionally some of the anti-scholastic rhetoric of the humanists did creep into his work. In Henno, a play he wrote for the Dalberg circle at Heidelberg, one of his characters makes a speech against the detractors of poetry and calls them "wild beasts and donkies."[63] Reuchlin made more explicit attacks on the scholastics in several passages of De verbo mirifico. At one point he criticized them for neglecting the sacred wisdom contained in the writings of ancient poets and sages. The people considered philosophy to be "the knowledge of all things human and divine," but today, Reuchlin complained, philosophers did nothing but ravel and unravel the perplex questions of the scholastics. He claimed that as a result, "the name of philosophy was a name of scorn."[64]

---

[61] See citations in Geiger, Reuchlin, 154.

[62] Johannes Reuchlin, Augenspiegel (Tübingen: Anshelm, 1512), F-H iv.

[63] Johannes Reuchlin, Komödien, ed. Hugo Holstein (Halle: Waisenhause, 1888), 117.

Reuchlin was convinced, however, that his work on Hebrew would improve the Biblical studies of the theologians by enabling them to read the Old Testament in the original language. Reuchlin himself wrote in 1513 that so great was his enthusiasm for the idioms and properties of languages that he could not study any writing unless it was an exact copy of the original.[65] He stressed the necessity for knowing the Old Testament in Hebrew in the introduction to his De rudimentis hebraicis. He urged the theologians to learn the language "so that the universal disdain for all the interpretations could be removed."[66] In the text of De rudimentis, he pointed out approximately two hundred passages in the Vulgate which did not agree with the Hebrew original. He noted that any one of these errors might lead to theological misinterpretations. Reuchlin himself was careful to draw no theological conclusions from his philological inquiries. After showing an error in Chronicles, he remarked in a typical statement, "I am not discussing the meaning as a theologian, but the words as a grammarian."[67]

---

[64] "Nam quid juvat mirabilia multa quotidie discere, nulla unquam facere? De nobis opinio in plebi est magne philosophiae ac omnium rerum scientiae. Sic enim illam describunt esse scilicet divinarum et humanarumque rerum notiam. Sed oro vos, amici optimi, quam praestabinus satisfactionem populo insignem atque illustrem studiorum nostrorum, dum eiuscemodi opera desunt? Est nos literae nosse, quas & quique abjectiores didicerunt. Nihil extollit disertos esse, quod natura mulierculis concessit. Nihil etiam quod tot & tam perplexas scholasticorum questiones vel intricare vel extricare profitemur. Quapropter nos ipsos potius stultos & insanos quam sapientes vulgo arbitrantur, adeo certe, ut in vituperium quasi nomen philosophiae nostro aevo devenerit. De verbo mirifico, (Basel: 1494), DIV, Divb.

[65] "Sed tantus mihi est erga linguarum idiomata et proprietates ardor, ut non valde laborare consueverim librum habere aliquem in alia lingua, quam in ea, in qua est conditus omnium primo, semper ipse timens de translatis quae me saepe quondam errare fecerunt." Reuchlin, Briefwechsel, 189.

[66] "Tunc enim tollitur omnium interpretationum commune fastidium, cum illa ipsa veteris testamenti biblia in sua primodiali, hoc est hebraica lingua, et legi a nostris et intellegi possit." Briefwechsel, 89.

Elsewhere Reuchlin asserted that "our doctors and teachers of the Holy Bible" would also benefit from studying the work of previous Hebrew scholars who had written commentaries on the Old Testament; among the scholars he named were Rabbi Salomon, Moses of Garona, Rabbi Levi, Joseph and David Kimchi.[68] Reuchlin made all his suggestions without the least sign of scorn or arrogance; to him the scholastics were not utter barbarians simply because they did not know Hebrew. Reuchlin was not a revolutionary or a radical reformer. His greatest wish was to serve the cause of theology and the Church.

---

[67] "Sed ego non de sententia ut theologus sedde vocabulis ut grammaticus disputo, *De rudimentis hebraicis*, 123.

[68] "Ich sag auch und hab des meinen anseger, daz sich unsere doctores und lerer der hailigen schrift zu verstentnus des texts in der bibel seer und fast sollicher commenten, glossen und usslegungen müssent gebrauchen, wöllent sie vor anfechtung fremds glaubens vol besten, . . ." Reuchlin, *Augenspiegel*, XII v.

We have seen that Mutian, Pirckheimer, and Reuchlin all went beyond the purely rhetorical and grammatical interests of their predecessors and turned their attention to Plato, Pythagoras and other ancient speculative thinkers. Their goal became the reform of philosophy and theology rather than the mere improvement of Latin style and the pursuit of eloquence. Yet it would be incorrect to assume that their concerns were typical of all the German humanists of this era. If anything, the majority of the humanists, especially those involved in university teaching, continued within the guidelines laid down by Luder, Perger, Niavis and others in the years before 1500.

The best known and most widely-read disciple of the early rhetorical tradition in German humanism was the professor of poetry and oratory at Tübingen, Heinrich Bebel. During the twenty years he held his position, Bebel was a conscientious teacher and an active author whose goal was to help Germans express themselves in clearer and more elegant Latin. In his numerous literary productions, he repeatedly attacked the scholastic traditions of the German universities, arguing that the retention of out-moded practices needlessly chained the Germans to their barbarian past. Understandably, many of his arguments had been stock-in-trade with the German humanists ever since Peter Luder's inaugural oration at Heidelberg. But there were also significant shifts in Bebel's intellectual position which set him apart from his humanist forebearers. Bebel, like so many men of his generation, was interested in applying his ideas to the reform of religious life and thought. For him, oratory and poetry offered benefits not only to lawyers and men of affairs, but also to theologians, who in Bebel's opinion, needed these studies more than anyone else.

Unfortunately little is known about Bebel's development as a humanist.[69] Born of a Swabian peasant family in 1472, he received his first schooling in the small village of Schelklingen. In 1492 he matriculated at the University of Cracow, a school with a number of humanist teachers in the late fifteenth century. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts, he studied for two semesters at the University of Basel, where he undoubtedly met Wimpheling's friend, Sebastian Brant, then professor of rhetoric at the Swiss university. In 1496 he moved north to the University of Tübingen. Whether he seriously considered further study toward his Master of Arts is not certain. In all likelihood, however, he already had his eye on the salaried chair of rhetoric and poetry established at that University in 1481. This is at least the logical inference to draw from the contents of his first published collection of poetry—a series of flattering verses addressed to Count Eberhard of Württemberg and a number of Tübingen professors.[70] His activities had the desired effect; in 1497 he became the regular professor of poetry and rhetoric at Tübingen. Four years later, on the recommendation of the Württemberg government, Emperor Maximillian awarded him the poet's laurel crown at Innsbruck. He taught at Tübingen until his death in 1517.

---

[69] Bebel is another figure who has been largely ignored by serious scholars; Gustav Bebermeyer, Tübingen Dichterhumanisten (Tübingen: Laupp, 1927), 1-47; Johannes Haller, "Heinrich Bebel als Dichter," Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum, 66 (1929), 51-54; Adalbert Horawitz, "Analecten zur Geschichte des Humanismus in Schwaben," Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, LXXXVI (1877), 217-278 has printed a few of his letters.

Bebel has often been called a conservative in his attitudes toward scholasticism. And it is true that Bebel wrote introductory poems for several works published by Tübingen scholastic theologians.[71] In all, Bebel wrote poems for eight treatises written by three Tübingen professors, Gabriel Biel, Conrad Summenhart and Wernherus Onsshusen.[72] Of the eight works, only three (all by Biel) were clearly "scholastic" compositions, i.e. formal commentaries or expositions on debatable points of theology; among the other books were two devotional works, a collection of sermons, a book on reforming monasticism and a funeral oration. Only the poems which Bebel composed for Biel's scholastic treatises are relevant here. In the two brief poems which he wrote for Biel's commentary on Occam, the poet exhorted priests to study "sacred books" and "divine volumes" so they might better instruct the people and protect them from the "heretical plague." He praised Biel as a man of great learning who offered great gifts.[73] Similarly, in the poem he wrote for Biel's exposition on the mass, Bebel encouraged the priests to study books on theology so they might instruct the people in the mysteries of the Church. Biel, wrote the poet, was "girded with divine majesty" and expressed himself "wonderfully."[74]

---

[70] Bebermeyer, *op. cit.*, 12.

[71] Heiko Obermann, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology*, 17-19.

[72] By Biel, *Epithoma expositionis Canonis* (1499), *Sermones* (1499) *Collectiorum ex Occamo circa quatuor sentiarum* (1501), *Expositio brevis Sacri Canonis* (1501); by Summenhart, *Oratio funebris. . .pro Principe Eberhardo* (1498), *Tractaculus exhortationis. . .supra decem defactibus virorum monasticorum* (1498) *Quod deus homo fieri voluerit* (1498); by Onsshusen, *Tractatus trium quaestrionum*; all cited in Karl Steiff, *Der erste Buchdruck in Tübingen* (Nieuwkopp: B. De Graff, 1963) reprint of 1881 edition, 49-75.

In light of Bebel's later criticisms of scholastic theology what is the meaning of these early poems? Did Bebel hope to ingratiate himself with the arts and theology faculty at the University? Did he merely like to see his name in print? Actually there is no reason to doubt Bebel's sincerity in his praise for these men. Biel and Summenhart, at least, were not only eminent theologians, but also outstanding preachers who showed a constant concern for the religious life of the Christian layman.[75] Being a religious man himself, Bebel undoubtedly admired the learning and piety of these men. But such admiration did not mean that Bebel approved the methodology and concerns of every scholastic theologian and philosopher. In fact Bebel's later career and writings show that just the opposite was true.

---

[73] Gabriel Biel, Collectiorum ex Occamo. . . . (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1965) L c ii; this is a photoreprint of the 1501 Tübingen edition.

[74] Gabriel Biel, Canonis nissae Expositio, ed. Heiko Oberman (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1967), IV, 185, 186.

Bebel's first publication during his Tübingen professerate clearly shows his interest in applying his poetical skills to religion. Entitled Liber hymnorum in metra noviter redactorum[76] and published in 1501, the book contained a collection of 158 hymns from the medieval and patristic period and a brief exposition of "difficult terms" in the hymns.

Included in the Book of Hymns was Bebel's first published attack on the deficiencies of arts course scholasticism—his Apologia et defensio poetice ac oratoriae majestatis. Bebel began his Apology by praising the achievements of the Greeks and Romans: they had left behind a great fund of literature to nourish and instruct future generations. But in his own day, Bebel complained that only the Italians had taken advantage of this heritage. The Germans spent their time in barbarian exercises and were ignorant of the more honorable disciplines. He claimed that even the bakers and workmen of ancient Rome spoke more elegant Latin than the most learned Germans were speaking. Not surprisingly, Bebel blamed these deficiencies on improper education, especially the retention of the "meager and twisted grammatical commentaries of Alexander Gallus."[77] Bebel's solution was equally predictable: increased study of the poets and orators of Greeck and Rome.

---

[75] On Biel, see Obermann, Harvest. . .; on Summenhart, F.Y. Linsenmann, Konrad Summenhart. Ein Culturbild (Tubingen: 1877).

[76] Published in Tübingen by Otman in 1501.

The most interesting aspect of Bebel's Apology was his conviction that such studies were mandatory for priests and theologians. He argued that without eloquence a theologian could not properly defend truth and refute error; nor could a preacher "inspire contrition and joy or deter his listeners from sin and exhort them to virtue."[78] To counter the argument that poetry was dangerous to Christians, he compiled passages from Augustine, Jerome and Basil which defended literary studies. He added that God certainly must approve of poetry since He had allowed so many beautiful hymns and psalms to be written in His praise. Bebel concluded that poetry was much more useful to the Church than "these sophistical and hateful disciplines which they call the liberal arts." Dialectic and philosophy had always been seedbeds of heresy, but "poetry had never given support to any kind of heresy, and rather had always been the most agreeable attendent and servant of divine things."[79]

---

[77] "Nostri autem suos in grammatica alexandri galli in quibus jejunis atque tortuosis grammatices commentariis desudare faciant." Liber hymnorum, iiii a.

[78] Ibid., iiii c

Bebel reiterated and expanded these ideas in the later works he composed for use in the classroom. In 1507 he published his Ars condendorum carminum, a book which described the various kinds of poems and outlined the rules for their composition. This was followed in 1509 by his Commentaria epistolarum conficiendum, a lengthy book which dealt not only with the rules of letter writing, but also contained essays on other subjects. For example he included a "commentary on the abuse of the Latin language" and brief compositions on the etymology of Latin names and "the art of speaking well;" in later editions he even added a section on the pronunciation of Hebrew words. Then in 1513, he published another collection of essays entitled Opusculum de institutione puerorum; this work included an "Apology and Defense against his Detractors," and "Oration of the Utility on Eloquence," and a "Little work on which Authors should be Read for the Preparation of Eloquence."

What ideas did these various works set forth for improving scholastic traditions? In Bebel's opinion, proper grammatical instruction was the most important prerequisite for the kind of literary education he envisioned. He stressed time and again that such instruction was impossible as long as teachers persisted in using the old medieval grammars, especially the *Doctrinale* of Alexander Villedieu. Surprisingly Bebel never wrote a Latin grammar of his own. He felt Donatus was suitable as an elementary text as long as it was studied "without any glosses and definitions, without *a priori* and *a posteriori* arguments and without modes of signification of terms, as certain barbarians are accustomed to deliver up."[80] He also approved the grammars written by Nicholas Perotti and his own student Jacob Henrichmann.[81]

---

[79] "Poetica autem nullam unquem heresim sulcitavit sed potior devinarum rerum ministra est et famula dulcissima." ibid., iiii e.

Like most of the other German humanists, Bebel conceded that some dialectical study was useful. But he criticized the German universities for spending altogether too much time on this one discipline. In his opinion, a mastery of the basic principles from Peter of Spain was sufficient. He also warned students to stay aloof from the bitter disputes among the nominalists and realists. Since the masters wanted to win as many students as possible to their own side, they used all kinds of

---

[80] *Opusculum de institutione puerorum*, A viii. I have used the edition printed by Schurr, a Strasburg printer, in 1513.

[81] Henrichmann's grammar, *Grammaticae institutiones*, was first published in 1511 by Anshelm of Tübingen; Bebel's *Ars condendorum carminum* was included in most editions.

"subtle and sophistical arguments" to defend "the theories of Saint Thomas, the formalities of Scotus and the connotations of William of Occam." These same masters were happy when they made a convert, even if their students turned out to be "verbose, burdensome and unreasonable."[82]

After the student had mastered his Latin grammar, Bebel advised him to go on to study the great classical authors. In his essay "Which Authors Should be Read for the Preparation of Eloquence," he listed the normal humanist favorites: for rhetoric, Cicero and Quintillian, for poetry, Vergil and Horace. He also directed the student to the writings of the Church fathers, all of whom he considered good models for Latin style. What Bebel thought about philosophical studies is not certain. In all likelihood he lumped philosophy with dialectic as something useful if taken in small doses. But he never wrote anything specific about philosophy and probably knew little about it, since he never received his Master of Arts degree.

Although he was no less a novice in theology than in philosophy, Bebel stressed repeatedly that classical studies were a necessity for every theologian and religious leader. He often listed the Church fathers and the recent Italian Popes as examples of religious men who cultivated poetry and oratory.[83] According to Bebel, classical literature taught the reader sound morality and therefore offered the theologian countless examples which he could use to point out the rewards of virtue and the penalties of sin. Furthermore, knowledge of rhetoric and poetry was needed to understand correctly the Biblical authors and the Church fathers. Bebel pointed out that many of these writers employed rhetorical and poetical devises in their work, and without an acquaintance with these two disciplines the reader would lose important shades of meaning.

---

[82] Opusculum. . ., A viii, A ix.

But according to Bebel, the greatest reward which the studia humanitatis offered the theologian was the acquisition of a truly elegant style. Although Bebel discussed this theme in many of his books, he presented his ideas most concisely in a brief selection he included in the 1516 edition of his Commentary on Composing Letters. Simply entitled Disputatio cum fratre theologo, the selection told of an argument Bebel had had with an Augustinian monk after one of his lectures. Bebel had stressed the importance of good style for theologians and chided them for corrupting a language which they used to appear learned. When the Augustinian questioned the poet's argument, Bebel immediately fell back on the example of the Church fathers, whose "style was golden" and whose "speech was serious, venerable and full of majesty." Compared to these men, said Bebel, the more recent theologians were sad specimens indeed. Even the most learned—Albertus Magnus, Aquinas, Scotus, Occam, Egidius of the Romans, Alexander Hales, Thomas Holcot and Gregory of Rimini—were unacceptable because of their "rough, dry, meager, trampled, and distorted way of writing." Bebel was sure that scholastic theologians had valuable things to say, but added that he would never be able to read them until they simplified their style. Furthermore, he ascribed the "sole blame" for their stylistic deficiencies to their love for those "most knotty and thorny teachings of the philosophers and dialecticians." When the monk argued that philosophy was necessary to fight heresy and defend dogma, Bebel responded that philosophy nurtured heresy rather than defended against it. And once again he raised the example of the Church fathers—"walls and columns of the church," who had extirpated heresy without using dialectic or philosophy.

---

[83] "Nicholaus quintus, Pius secundus, Paulus secundus, Sixtus quartus, Alexander sextus, quanti fecerint poetas atque Oratores, quamque liberassime tractaverint, testantur tot libri & commentaria manipulatim eis dedicata." ibid., A iii.

Succeeding chapters will discuss the thought of other humanists who sought to reform scholastic theology in the years before the Reformation. The ideas of Mutian, Pirckheimer, Reuchlin and Bebel, however, give a good idea of what the humanist criticisms entailed. Mutian criticized the scholastics for their ignorance of Plato and Pirckheimer attacked their weakness as teachers of moral philosophy; Reuchlin demanded that they study the Bible in the original languages and Bebel called on them to write in elegant Latin. The humanists envisioned the theologian as a pious and learned individual with literary skill, not only trained in logic and Aristotelian metaphysics, but also in Platonism, rhetoric, Biblical studies, Greek and Hebrew. They called for a return to the intellectual practices of Christian antiquity; the Church fathers—Augustine, Jerome, Cyprian and Origen—became their models.

CHAPTER VI

LITERARY FEUDS AND PAMPHLET WARS,
1500-1510.

Despite scattered humanist outbursts, before 1500 humanists and scholastics in Germany had existed side-by-side with only occasional friction. There had yet to be a major confrontation between the partisans of the two groups, in which pamphlets were exchanged, invectives were hurled and arguments were offered and refuted. Would humanism's growing strength and new religious orientation after 1500 alter this situation? In the early sixteenth century, two substantial-looking controversies appear to have taken place. Between 1500 and 1504 a short but bitter pamphlet war occurred on the relationship between poetry and theology in which two Leipzig academics were protagonists. **And** between 1503 and 1510, an Ingolstadt humanist, Jacob Locher, became the central figure in a lengthy debate on the value of scholastic theology. Did these literary feuds prove the incompatability of humanism and scholasticism? This chapter will examine these conflicts and discuss their significance.

The first conflict began in 1500 when a Leipzig theologian, Conrad Wimpina, published a book entitled, Apology in

Defense of Sacred Theology against those who have strived to Establish that Poetry is its Well-Spring, Source and Patron.[1] What motivated him to write his *Apology* is one of the many puzzling aspects of the affair.[2] From his previous background, one would not have expected Wimpina to attack humanists and poetry. During the 1480's, as a student and teacher on the Leipzig arts faculty, he had showed a definite predilection for humanist ideas. He had studied in Rome, written a book on letter writing and had published two poetical works, one a description of the city of Leipzig, the other a history of the deeds of the Saxon Dukes.[3] His book on letter writing was a rather meager effort, but it did contain selections from Cicero, Ovid and a few Italian humanists. What then caused him to write against poetry in 1500?

Wimpina gave his version of how the dispute started in the introduction to his Apology. According to him, a "certain poet" (whom he did not name) had written some verses which claimed that poetry was the fons sacratae sophiae or the "source of sacred wisdom."[4] Some Leipzig priests considered this to be an affront to theology, and attacked the poet in their sermons. The poet then responded by writing more poems which repeated his ideas and also slandered the Leipzig clergy and monks. When this happened, tells Wimpina, many priests and students of theology pleaded with him to write a response. The result was the Apology in Defense of Sacred Theology.

---

[1] *Apologeticus in Sacretheologie defensionem, Adversus eos qui nixi sunt eidem fontem Caput et patronam Poesim instituere: ac per hoc nec sacram theosim: jure religionis nostre: monarchum et architectonicam habituum scientialium agnoscere revererique*. (Leipzig: 1500).

[2] For the general developments in the conflict, see Gustav Bauch, *Geschichte des Leipziger Frühhumanismus*, 105-169; Theodor Grüneberg, "Martin Pollich von Mellerstadt, der erster Rektor der Wittenberg Universität," *450 Jahre Martin Luther Universität* (Leipzig: Grossbuchdruckerei, 1956), 87-93; Joseph Negwer, *Konrad Wimpina* (Breslau: G.P. Aderholz, 1909), 47-69.

[3] *Precepta coaugmentande Rethorice oracionis comodissima* (Leipzig: 1486/7); *Alme universitatis Studii lipzensis et urbis liptzg descripcio per M. Conradum de Wimpina* (Leipzig: M. Brandi, 1488); *Bellorum illustriumque actorum Principis Alberti Ducis Saxonie Epithoma* (Leipzig: 1497).

Wimpina stated at the beginning of his work that he did not want to detract from poetry as such. He only wanted to assign it to its proper place among the scholarly disciplines. Specifically he wanted to refute the contention that poetry was the source of sacred wisdom, and therefore "higher" than theology. Such a contention, stated Wimpina, could only have been made by an "impertinent man who from youth has studied myths and made verses, but understands nothing of philosophy and theology." Wimpina drew his main arguments from passages of Aquinas and Aristotle on the hierarchy of the various disciplines. He pointed out that Aristotle, "easily the monarch of all things learnable," considered poetry the lowest of all the arts because it had no set methodology. He also quoted the passage from Aquinas's Summa theologica where the theologian had written that "sacred doctrine transcended all other disciplines, whether speculative or practical." Wimpina added that Aquinas, like Aristotle, had a very low estimation of poetry. According to Wimpina, Aquinas considered poetry lower than logic, topics and rhetoric; in other words, poetry was certainly not the peak of theology but rather the "tail" (cauda) of logic.

---

[4] Bauch, Geschichte des Leipziger Frühhumanismus, 105, surmises the poet was Sigismundus Fagilicus, a Breslau humanist then at Leipzig.

Wimpina also set forth arguments from his own experience. He pointed out that he was familiar with many poets and had even written some poetry himself. But, he continued, he had never learned any theology from the poetry he studied. What could a poet possibly say about general concepts, logical relationships and attributes or the weightier problems of grace, the sacraments and the trinity? In fact, Wimpina recommended that future theologians avoid too much contact with poetry. The reading of such frivolous material dulled the mind and weakened the intellect. Poetical studies (in which he included rhetoric) were perhaps sufficient training for someone interested in law, but for physicians and theologians, philosophy and logic offered the best preparation.

The Leipzig theologian went on to discuss the use that previous religious writers had made of poetry. He conceded that Augustine and Jerome had both studied rhetoric and poetry;

but he asserted that their excellence as theologians resulted from their training in philosophy rather than pagan literature. He also pointed out that as mature Christians both men regretted their early infatuation with poetry. Biblical writers had also expressed themselves in verse, but poetry inspired only the form, and not the content of their work. Wimpina did acknowledge that poetry was useful in composing hymns. Of course, in his opinion, this did not prove that poetry was the source and origin of theology.

Finally Wimpina tried to prove that theology was superior to poetry by virtue of its great antiquity. His first argument was based on an allegorical interpretation of Genesis, which Augustine had already hinted at. When on the first day of creation God had said, "Let there be light," Wimpina claimed that light symbolized "holy, speculative theology." His second argument rested on a false chronology which dated Abraham and Moses before the Trojan War and even before the deeds of Zeus and the pagan gods. Since the great Jewish leaders had been prophets rather than poets, this proved that theology predated poetry.

Wimpina's work definitely contained a few sections which were "anti-humanist." Although he disclaimed any intention of attacking poetry as such, he did refer to it as the "whore of the sciences" and a "mere frothing of words." He also argued that poetical studies were frivolous for serious intellects, and that philosophy and logic were much more valuable. These were opinions which of course offended most German humanists. But the bulk of Wimpina's arguments had been directed against a theory which few German humanists espoused. The humanists argued that poetical and rhetorical studies might improve scholastic theology by teaching eloquence and decreasing abstract speculation, but few of them defended the proposition that somehow poetry was the source of theology or superior to it.

Consequently, Martin Polich von Mellerstadt, the man who confronted Wimpina's arguments, was not a humanist at all. He was a physician, trained in scholastic philosophy, who had shown no real interest in poetry or rhetoric before 1500.[5] After receiving his Master of Arts in 1476 from Leipzig, he went on to teach in the arts faculty while studying medicine. He taught two typically scholastic subjects—logic and physics; he even wrote two handbooks on these subjects which were published after his death.[6] In the mid-1480's he had become the personal physician and astrologer for the Saxon Elector, Frederick the Wise. From that point on he divided his time between lecturing at the University and attending the Elector. He apparently became acquainted with Conrad Celtis when the poet lectured at Leipzig in 1486. But from his personal interests and writings, Martin Polich was an unlikely candidate to oppose the arguments of Wimpina.

---

[5] On Polich see article by Grüneberg cited above; also, "Martin Pollich von Mellrichstadt," Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, XXVI (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1888), 393-395.

[6] Cursus Logici commentariorum. . . (Leipzig: Lother, 1514); M.Polichii. . .exquisita cursus physici collectanea (Leipzig: Lother, 1514).

It appears that personal rivalry rather than devotion to poetry motivated Polich to enter the controversy. In the late 1490's Polich and another Leipzig physician, Simon Pistoris, had exchanged a series of bitter pamphlets about the causes of syphillis. Polich, abandoning an early interest in astrology, attacked Pistoris's contention that a special combination of stars was causing the European epidemic. For reasons which are not clear, Wimpina had helped Pistoris compose several of his attacks on Polich. This co-operation of Wimpina's so angered Polich that he decided to write a refutation of the theologian's book on poetry and theology. Toward the end of 1500 he published his _Laconismus tumultarius . . . in defensionem poetices contra quendam theologum_.[7]

Even Polich did not intend to defend the far-fetched proposition that poetry was the source and well-spring of theology. Instead, he claimed he was interested in defining poetry as one of several sources of "sacred wisdom," a term he felt encompassed more than "theology." In defending this proposition, Polich did make a few humanist-like arguments. In the introduction, for example, he expressed the hope that his book would help preserve poetical studies at Leipzig. He feared that if the "sickening and nonsensical" Apologeticus went unanswered, poetry would be brushed aside, and students would be deprived of instruction in disciplines which all the Church fathers had enthusiastically approved. Polich also sounded like a humanist when he tried to refute Wimpina's statement that he knew no poets who had written on religious subjects. He claimed this showed Wimpina's ignorance, and then prodeeded to list poets who he considered to have written on "sacred wisdom." Among them were David, Lactantius and Prudentius among the ancients, Baptista Mantuanus, Johann von Dalberg and Conrad Celtis among the moderns. Furthermore, argued Polich, even the pagan poets were capable of teaching valuable lessons about virtue and right-living.

---

[7] _Laconismus tumultuarius Martini Mellerstad ad illustrissimos saxonie Principes in defensionem poetices contra quendam theologum editus_ (Leipzig: J. Thanner, 1501?).

But Polich, the physician well-trained in scholastic argumentation, showed through in most of his remarks in the Laconismus. His book was basically a minute examination of all of Wimpina's arguments, in which Polich pointed out logical inconsistencies and inaccuracies in definitions. He questioned Wimpina's use of Aristotle and Aquinas, doubted his interpretation of the Genesis story and criticized his conception of poetry and rational philosophy. He did offer a few subtle arguments of his own to support the contention that poetry might be a source for theology. But most humanists would have dismissed them as mere "sophistry." He argued that rational philosophy was the basis of theology, and since poetry was a part of rational philosophy, it was therefore a source of theology. He also argued that speculative theology was not always clear and accurate; therefore poetry's lack of a set methodology did not negate its value.

The dispute between the two men had boiled down to a clash between two scholastics, each employing dialectical skill to support his point of view. Although Wimpina occasionally sounded "anti-humanist," and Polich occasionally sounded "pro-humanist," their disagreement was no clear-cut clash between humanism and scholasticism. The succeeding three years of the dispute confirms this interpretation. Wimpina answered Polich's book in 1502 with his Responsio et Apologia against the Laconismus of a Certain Physician.[8] The Responsio added nothing to the arguments already set forth in the Apologeticus. In the introduction Wimpina repeated that his book was directed not against poetry, but only against the contention that it was higher than theology. He then proceeded to list all the errors he had found in Polich's book. At the top of the list was Polich's contention that "the source of sacred theology is the art of poetry invented by human beings." This was followed by ninety one other errors of varying gravity. Among them were:

---

[8] Responsio et Apologia Conradi Wimpine contra laconismum cuiusdam medici pro defensione Sacretheologie, Et veritas fidei: Ad illustrissimos Saxonie Principes (no place or date).

> 19. Our schools of theology are undistinguished in design.
> 23. Poetry confirms the articles of faith.
> 24. Poetry strengthens the articles of faith.
> 25. Articles of faith are not more certain than poetry.
> 28. To believe is not more worthy than to pass judgement, against Alexander of Hales.
> 39. To demonstrate and proceed scientifically is not suitable to theology.
> 42. Not to believe with Augustine in the antiquity of theology and divine wisdom.
> 65. Natural acquaintance of angels is not occasional, against Egidius of Rome.
> 66. To reckon it an error that the knowledge of the saints was discursive, against Scotus. 9
> 85. Cimbrians were not Flemish. 10
> 86. Moses was not more ancient than the Egyptians.
> 92. To argue that the Apologeticus called evangelical teaching obscurities.

In the main text Wimpina simply discussed the ninety two errors which he had found. The major scholastics—Aquinas, Bonaventure, Scotus, Henry of Langenstein and Capreolus—were his authorities. At the close he called on Polich to debate the issue before the local Bishop, the Chancellor of the

---

[9] 65. Angelorum noticiam naturalem non esse successivam, contra Edidium.
66. Errorem putare scientiam Beatorum esse discursivam, contra Scotum.

[10] "Cimbros non esse flamingos, contra Tartellium." The Cimbrians were an ancient German Tribe; how this related to anything is not certain.

University, the faculty members or even the Inquisitor-general of Germany. He also included a prayer to the Virgin asking her to make the author of the Laconismus "see his errors and desist from them."

Before 1502 was over, Polich responded to Wimpina's Responsio with his In Wimpinas offensiones et denigrationes Sacre theologe. Once again the old authorities were cited and the old arguments were revived. Polich's only claim to originality lay in the "descriptive" names he applied to his opponent: among them, "that lowest and paltriest of all men, that fox and barking hound, most beggardly ape, superstitious hypocrite, that two legged donkey, that impudent, dishonorable and dispicable man." Polich ended his role in the affair with this second work but Wimpina summarized many of the old arguments again in 1503 with still another attack on Polich: Responsio et Apologia Conradi Wimpinae de Fagis ad Mellerstatinas offensiones et denigrationes Sacre theologie.[11]

Thus what has been referred to as the first great conflict between humanism and scholastic theology came to an end in late 1503. But clearly humanism was not really the main issue. Some of the debated questions, such as the value of classical literature and the usefulness of rhetorical and poetical studies had been raised time after time in humanist scholastic debates. But few humanists accepted the main proposition that poetry was the well-spring for sacred theology. The "defender of humanism" turned out to be a scholastic physician who wrote commentaries on Aristotelian logic and physics, and whose methods of argumentation were clearly in the scholastic tradition. The "detractor of humanism" turned out to be a theologian who had previously written two books of poetry and a manual on rhetoric. It would appear that personal rivalry and ambition were the main reasons for the duration of the conflict and the persistence of the protagonists. Did it seem any different to the contemporaries of Polich and Wimpina?

---

[11] (Leipzig: Melchior Lother, 1503).

In general the intellectual world outside of Leipzig was totally indifferent to the affair. None of the leading German humanists came to Polich's defense; in fact none of them even mentioned the controversy in their letters and writings. The only person outside of Leipzig who expressed himself on the conflict was Bohuslaus of Hassenstein, a Bohemian chancellery humanist and a friend of both Wimpina and Polich. He also seems to have thought that personal rivalry precipitated the affair. In a letter to Wimpina in 1502, he did not question Wimpina's judgement in attacking good learning and classical literature. Rather he expressed his sorrow that the two "brightest lights in Leipzig" were now bitter enemies because of their short tempers. He asked,

> What will be the talk of people in the future, if Conrad and Martin, who to this point have been models of virtue and modesty, now loose the reins of their passions, and in the way of those driven by their emotions like the winds, struggle fiercely between themselves. [12]

He urged them to end their search for glory and renew their friendship.

Within the narrower arena of Leipzig, Polich and Wimpia both had a few supporters. After the publication of Wimpina's Responsio in 1502, an otherwise unknown friend of his, Friedrich Seitz, wrote a short pamphlet praising the arguments and learning of the Leipzig theologian.[13] The book was a simple summary of Wimpina's two previous works on the controversy. At the end he called on all the theologians of western Europe to combine against Polich's heresy. On behalf of Polich, Sigismund Flagilicus, the poet who had apparently set off the entire affair by slandering the Leipzig monks, contributed a few poems which were published with the Laconismus. One depicted Polich fighting on behalf of the muses, another praised poetry in general terms, while a third celebrated Polich's victory over his opponent. He also wrote several poems against

---

[12] "Quem enim arbitramini sermonem vulgi de vobis futurum, se Conradus Martinusque, qui hactenus virtutis modestiaeque exemplum fuerunt, nunc affectibus suis frena laxaverint et more eorum, qui perturbationibus tamquam ventis agitantur, enter se digladiati fuerint. Josef Truhlár, ed., Listár Bohuslava Hasisteinskéko Zlobkovic (Prague: Akadamie, 1893),43.

[13] Ad Prestantem et magne eruditionis virum Magistrum Conradum Wimpine prodefensione sacre theologie et theologice veritatis, (no place or date).

Wimpina with the various titles, In Arrogulum, In Loquaculum, In Philopompum; among other things he questioned Wimpina's learning and called him a "dung-eating pig."

Another humanist to take a hand in the dispute was Hermann Buschius, the wandering humanist who was at Leipzig in the early 1500's. After the appearance of Polich's Laconismus, he composed a brief pamphlet, "To Martin Mellerstadt, a Man of Remarkable and Rare Erudition and most Inclined to all Good Letters."[14] Buschius described how Polich's book had reached him at carnival time, and that he had found it so pleasurable that he gave up his celebrating to read and study it. He praised Polich's Latin, tried his hand at calling Wimpina names, and attacked the theologian's barbarism. He added very little to the scholarly aspect of the debate.

Buschius's early defense of Polich seems to support the contention that humanism was the main issue in the debate. But in 1503 Buschius had completely reversed himself and was supporting Wimpina! When Wimpina published his Oration in Recommendation of Sacred Theology[15] in 1503, it included no less than five brief laudatory poems by Buschius. He praised Wimpina's learning and regretted his own early rashness in attacking him. Buschius's about-face was another instance of self-interest winning out over principle in this dispute. When Buschius wrote his first pamphlet, Polich had left Leipzig and was in Wittenberg helping to establish the new university founded by Frederick the Wise. Buschius wanted a job at the new school and came to Polich's defense. He received the position and delivered a festive oration at the opening ceremonies of the new University. But for some reason he soon left Wittenberg and returned to Leipzig, where he stayed until 1508. Apparently his praise of Wimpina was an attempt to restore himself to good graces at the University he had just left.

---

[14] Prestabili et rare eruditiones viro Martino Mellerstat alias Polichio ducali phisico et litteratorum omnium favissori (Leipzig: J. Thanner, 1502).

[15] Oratio in recommendationem Sacretheologie domini Conradi Wimpina de Fagis. . .(Leipzig: Thanner ?, 1503).

In summary the pamphlet war between Wimpina and Polich was not a direct confrontation between humanism and scholasticism. The point at issue was not an important part of the humanist program, and the two main protagonists were scholastics who both had a passing acquaintance with humanism. The indifference of most humanists, and the peculiar behavior of Buschius show that personalities and ambitions were more important than issues.

The second controversy in the early sixteenth century involved a bewildering and illogical sequence of events. But at least the defender of humanism was not a scholastic physician, but rather Celtis's immediate successor as humanist lecturer at Ingolstadt, Jacob Locher Philomusus.[16] In fact Locher was exactly the kind of humanist one would expect to have difficulties with the scholastics. His own scholastic studies had been a complete failure; between 1487 and 1492 he had attended Basel, Freiburg and Ingolstadt, but apparently he never attained his Bachelor of Arts. His main acquisition from his university training had been an interest in classical literature, which he had studied under Sebastian Brant at Basel and under Conrad Celtis at Ingolstadt. In 1493 he left for Italy and traveled through most of the peninsula. In 1495 he returned to Freiburg, taught there briefly and finally in 1497 became the salaried humanist lecturer at Ingolstadt.

Locher was an active and many-sided writer, whose literary productions included more than twenty works. Before the beginning of his controversy in 1503 he had already written on a wide variety of subjects. He had compiled handbooks on grammar[17] and rhetoric,[18] written a play on the exploits of Charles VIII of France[19] and published several orations in honor of classical studies and Emperor Maximillian.[20] The one work which gave Locher a Europe-wide reputation was his Latin translation of the *Narrenschiff*, the well-known satirical poem originally written in German by his former teacher at Basel, Sebastian Brant. It was republished many times after its first appearance in 1497, and served as the basis for later translations into French, Dutch-Flemish and English.[21]

---

[16] Dr. Hehle, Der Schwäbische Humanist Jacob Locher Philomusus (Ehingen: C.L. Feger, 1875), (Programm des Königlichen Gymnasiums in Ehingen, 1871-72, 1873-74, 1874-75).

[17] Hain, op. cit., II, 274, lists only Nova grammatica (1495); perhaps this was simply an edition of Perger's grammar by the same name.

[18] Epithoma Rhetorices graphicum, a Jacobo Locher Philomuso congestum. Carmen ejusdem ad divam Catharinam (Freiburg: Riederer, 1496).

These early works contained many of the typical humanist attacks on scholastic logic and medieval grammars. But Locher, like Aesticampianus, was also interested in applying humanism to the reform of scholastic theology. In a work from 1497, *Theologica emphasis sive dialogus super eminentia quattuor doctorum ecclesiae*,[22] he lashed out at the scholastic theologians. Most of the twenty-five page book consisted of a staged dialogue between Locher and Ulrich Zasius, the famous jurist, whom Locher knew from his studies at Freiburg. The topic of discussion, which was the responsibility of Christian teachers, gave both speakers ample opportunity to show how superior the Church fathers had been to the present breed of theologians. This was so, ran the argument, because the fathers had known classical literature and had not "filled their days and nights in scholastic combats." In Locher's words,

---

[19] *Historia de Regi Franciae, cum nonullis aliis versibus et elegiis* (Freiburg: Frederick Riederer, 1495).

[20] *Panegyricus ad Macimilianum. . .* (Strassburg: Grüninger, 1497); *Oratio de studio humanarum disciplinarum et laude poëtarum* (Freiburg ?: 1496).

[21] Edwin H. Zeydel, *Sebastian Brant*, (New York: Twayne, 1967), 91.

[22] (Basel: 1496).

> they fought not with the tortuous obligations of the __elenchies__, not with the verbose disputes of the sophists, not in the trickeries of the Stoic sect; rather they unleashed clear and gleaming missiles at the savage barbarians and the impudent enemies of the Christian church. 23

Locher concluded his work with four lengthy poems describing the life and accomplishments of those humanist favorites, Gregory, Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine.

If his attacks on the theologians made him suspect to a few Ingolstadt scholastics, his personality and teaching methods probably offended others. He was a vain and pompous individual, given to gaudy clothes and lecture-room histrionics. Already in 1502 passages from two of Locher's works indicated that he had acquired opponents at Ingolstadt. He complained that these enemies had criticized him before Duke George and had made fun of the plays which he and his students had produced.[24] Then in the early summer of 1503, Locher

---

[23] "Non tortuosis elenchorum nexibus nec verbosa sophistarum digladiatione neque Chrysippeis machinis pugnant, sed aperta et fulgida tela in rabidos barbaros et christianae sectae impudentissimos hostes mittunt." Hehle, __op. cit__., I, 21.

[24] Hehle, __op. cit__., I, 40.

abruptly resigned his post at Ingolstadt. What prompted him to give up his position is not certain. There is little doubt from later evidence that Locher considered his departure to have been humiliating in one way or another. But the Ingolstadt archives contain only two brief documents on the event: first an official resignation in which Locher renounced all claims for his salary, second, a note signed by Locher showing he owed the University treasury fifteen Rhenish guldens.[25] He had already lined up a new job for himself at Freiburg-im-Breisgau, where he had previously studied and taught. Within a short time he was in Freiburg and received a three or five year contract to teach rhetoric and poetry at a salary of fifty two guldens.[26]

Although the humanist had found another position with apparent ease, he still was seething over what he considered had been a forced departure from Ingolstadt. Accordingly, shortly after his arrival at Freiburg he published a vicious attack on the man he felt had been his greatest enemy at Ingolstadt; he entitled the work The Apology of Jacob Locher Philomusus against the Most Passionate Enemy of the Poets,

---

[25] Ibid., II, 8.

[26] "Ipsa die (Veneris, in vigilia Johannis) receptus fuit Philomusus in Universitate ad lecturam in Poesi ad triennium seu quinquennium, juxta et secundum quod comperietur ei scriptum fuisse per Syndicum Magistrum Michaelem." Schreiber, Geschichte der Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, I, 70.

George Zingel, Theologian.[27] Who was George Zingel? He was in his mid-seventies when the dispute began, and had been teaching theology at Ingolstadt ever since the University had opened its doors in 1475. He never published anything himself, but he was a highly venerated figure among the Ingolstadt scholars. He was four times chosen rector, and he held the deaconship of the theology faculty for thirty one of his thirty three years at the school. One puzzling aspect of the whole controversy is why Zingel provoked Locher's wrath in the first place. For in spite of his old age, Zingel was definitely receptive to some of the new humanist ideas. In 1507, for example, during debates over curriculum change at Ingolstadt, Zingel was among the reformers who urged the adoption of Perotti's new grammar text.[28] And Zingel's relationship with Conrad Celtis seems to have been exceedingly friendly. The poet had even composed a flattering ode in praise of Zingel, "To George Zingel, Theologian, Opponent of the Jurists for not Learning the Liberal Arts."[29] The

---

[27] *Apologia Jacobi Locher Philomusi contra poetarum acerrimum Hostem Georgium Zingel Theologum Ingolstadiensem* (Strasburg: Grüninger, 1505). Copy in the Bavarian State Library, Munich.

[28] Prantl, *Geschichte der Ludwigs-Maximillians Universität*, I, 104-106; Bauch, *Die Anfänge des Humanismus in Ingolstadt*, 89.

[29] "Ad Georgium Cygnum theologeum se contra jurisperitos ob artes liberales non discendas opponentem," Celtis, *Quattuor Odarum Liber*, ed. Pindter, 53, 54.

The meaning of the ode is not altogether clear, but it probably referred to some dispute at Ingolstadt which we now know nothing about. Celtis praised the theologian both for his learning and virtue.[30] Zingel apparently respected Celtis and even lent him some money sometime during the poet's stormy career at Ingolstadt. And after Celtis had gone on to Vienna, Zingel sent him an amicable letter, calling him a "special friend," and wishing him good luck in his new position.[31]

But it is quite apparent that Zingel had said or done something which had infuriated Locher. For Locher's brief eight-page Apology was by far the most bitter invective produced in all of German humanist writing. The list of imaginative and descriptive names which he applied to Zingel was almost endless; among other things, Zingel was called "an old dog," "a raving Occamist," "invidious horned snake," "foul beast," "hissing viper" and a "monstrous devil." Locher also questioned Zingel's parentage and expressed grave doubts about his intelligence. Locher's main argument was that Zingel's behavior was endangering the whole University of Ingolstadt. According to Locher, the old theologian had slandered the entire faculty and made the teachers laughable in the eyes of the students; he had "called the poets very foolish, the philosophers poisoners, the lawyers troublemakers and 'Law Merchants', and the physicians murderers."[32] Nor surprisingly, in Locher's mind, Zingel's most heinous deed had been his attacks on the poets, i. e., Jacob Locher. The theologian, claimed Locher, opposed the new methods of grammar instruction, and persisted in the belief that Latin was best learned through "posterior and prior analytics, the suppositions of Marsilius and contraposition."[33] Furthermore, Zingel's deceits, trickery and traps had driven him from Ingolstadt. He had interfered with his courses, incited the University council against him, demeaned his learning before Duke George, and accused him of corrupting morals and inciting disturbances. And to top everything, Locher claimed that sixty six armed men hired by Zingel had tried to murder him. Unfortunately, Locher did not relate how he managed to fend off this small army. Nor does the Apology give any clue to the reasons why Zingel disliked the humanist. But a brief section at the end of the work implies that Zingel may have objected to Locher's dramatic productions. The humanist argued that Zingel's attacks on his plays were completely unjustified. "What improper," he asked, "what illicit, finally what of unfitting and improper appearance was shown, what did we tell of the anti-Christ?"[34] Everyone else who had seen the play had applauded and approved.

---

[30] "Mente divina relegis libellos,
Qui docent sacro superos honore
Prosequi et magno dominum sedentem
    Noscere caelo, ...

Angulos vitat latebrasque caecas
Negligens spinas salebrasque densas
Et suam vitam cupit approbare
    Numina caeli. ibid., 54.

[31] Conrad Celtis, Briefwechsel, 292.

---

[32] ". . .poetas vanissimos, phylosophos venemosos, jureconsultos rabulas, et legum venditores, medicos sicarios adpellavit per contumacium." Apologia. . . ., Aii.

[33] "Grammaticam in angulis si pario opertis pueros docuit non per erotemata, non per tropicas figuras, non per casus, modos & genera, sed per posteriora, prioraque Aristotelis, per suppositiones Marsilii per aversam lineam & per contrapositionem quam greci antitheton vocant." ibid., Aiic. The Marsilius mentioned was probably Marsilius of Inghen, first rector of Heidelberg.

Locher's remarkable pamphlet was not a general attack on scholastic theology, but a rather distasteful verbal assault on a single scholastic theologian who had apparently questioned the humanist's ideas or teaching methods. Zingel did not respond himself, but he appealed to the University of Ingolstadt to do something on his behalf. When the matter was taken before the University council in late 1504, the faculties of law and medicine recommended that Ingolstadt take no official position. The jurists pointed out that since Locher had published his Apology at Freiburg, that school should handle any discipline. But finally, on the recommendation of the faculties of arts and theology, the rector decided that Ingolstadt should publish an official defense of Zingel which would clear him of Locher's accusations. The jurists opposed the measure but it was not reversed.[35]

---

[34] "ex nostris declamationibus, ex spectaculis ac publicisdramatibus carpere potuit? quid improbum, quid illicitum, quid denique sine decoro honestoque visorio exhibibatur? Quid antichristum fabulamur? ibid., A iii.

Ingolstadt's defense of Zingel appeared in early 1505 with the imposing title, *Vindication by the Rector and Council of the Venerable and Famous University of Ingolstadt on behalf of Georg Zingel against the Invective Unjustly and Impiously Composed by Jacob Locher under cover of an Apology*.[36] Compared to Locher's outburst, the *Vindication* was a mild composition with little mud slinging. The author did call Locher a liar and pointed out his outrageous language. In a significant remark, he noted that such language was particularly unsuited "for a person who called himself a theologian."

The only real attacks on humanism consisted of criticisms of pagan poetry. The author argued that Christian poets were sufficient models for teaching elegance, so there was no need to study Greek and Roman poetry; he also repeated the oft-heard argument that Plato in the *Republic* called for the expulsion of all poets from the city.[37] But most of the eight page pamphlet stuck to rebutting Locher's various accusations against Zingel. It claimed, for example, that Zingel had never slandered the members of the other faculties, and that it had really been Locher himself who had done this. It also denied that Zingel had hired sixty six armed men to do away with Locher; the author pointed out that an intelligent man like Zingel would have realized two or three men could have done a better job.

---

[35] Bauch, *Die anfänge des Humanismus in Ingolstadt*, 73-76.

[36] *Expurgatio rectoris et consilii almi ac celebris gymnasii Ingolstadiensis pro dno Georgio Zingel sacrae theologiae magistro ordinareo et vicecancellorio in eo dem Gymnasio. . .contra invectivam sub velamine apologiae a Jacobo Locher Ph—O*. (no place or date). copy in Bavarian State Library.

[37] "Possent legi adolescentibus poetae christiani, Prudentius

It did not take Locher long to compose another short pamphlet in reply to the Vindication.[38] Again his main concern seemed to be the defamation of Zingel; he called him everything from "deceitful and bombastic" to "putrid and filthy." He refused to take back anything he had written in his first book, adding that "the gods in heaven know the simple candor of my words." He also attacked the authors of the Vindication and made a great deal of the fact that only two of Ingolstadt's four faculties had approved of the book. As for structured arguments against scholasticism or in favor of humanism, the book contained none.

Until this point Locher's dispute with Zingel had followed a course one would expect in a conflict between humanism and

---

et Baptista Mantuanus, in quibus latinitas et elegantia et quidquid in gentilibus disci potest, copiosissime reperitur." ibid.

[38] Jacobi Locher Ph—i in anticategoriam rectoris cujiusdam et conciliabuli Gymnasii Ingolstadiensis responsio compendiosa cum declaratione Zingelensis factionis. Published in September or October, 1505, perhaps at Basel.

scholasticism. Personalities may have played a greater role than opposition or devotion to humanism. But at least a poet and a scholastic theologian had been the two protagonists. In 1505, the lines became confused. In that year the conflict spread to the University of Freiburg where Locher acquired two new important enemies. And they were not "raving Occamists" like Zingel, but two well-known Rhineland humanists—Jacob Wimpheling, the pious grammarian, who was in Freiburg in early 1505, and Ulrich Zasius, the jurist who had preceded Locher as Freiburg's salaried humanist. What makes this situation even more curious is that up until 1505, Locher's relationship with both men had been very congenial. Locher had come to know Wimpheling through his studies and friendship with Sebastian Brant, Wimpheling's best friend. Locher had even written several poems and letters which had been published in works by Wimpheling—De integritate, the second edition of Adolescentia and Apologia pro republica christiana. Locher had also been on good terms with Zasius and had used him as the second figure in the dialogue he had written for his Theologia emphasis. But when the older men had read Locher's fulminations against Zingel, and when they had observed his unbounded enthusiasm for pagan poetry, it offended their traditionalism and Catholic piety. For Wimpheling the experience had a decided effect on his attitudes toward humanism and scholasticism. By 1510, the humanist reformer of the 1490's would become the defender of scholastic theology.

In 1505 Wimpheling and Zasius began a quiet campaign of harassment against Locher. Wimpheling composed a brief satire against the poet which he probably circulated among friends at the University. The satire was a transcript of statements which Locher had allegedly made to Wimpheling during confession.[39] In the course of the confession, Locher naturally admits to all kinds of outrageous sins. He asks forgiveness for "dismembering and denigrating" the fame of George Zingel in a "crude and impious" way. He admits that he had stained the reputation of an honorable man with lies and had unjustly made fun of his learning.

But it is clear from this falsified confession that aside from his attacks on Zingel, two other qualities made Locher objectionable in Wimpheling's eyes. First there was his love for pagan poetry. Among other things, Locher admitted to an overveneration for Ovid: "I have proclaimed and written that the filthiest and most impure poet, Ovid, was very temperate, pure and chaste, and generally of a clean mind."[40] Furthermore he had slandered "angelic Politian" and

---

[39] Printed by Joseph Schlecht, "Zu Jacob Wimphelings Fehden mit Jakob Locher und Paul Lang," Festgabe Karl Theodor von Hiegel (Munich: Haushalter, 1903), 239-242.

[40] "Remitte michi, Deus meus, quod spurcissimum atque impurissimum poetam Ovidium clamavi et scripsi fuisse continentissimum, castissimum et pudicissimum, carmine quidem lascivum, sed mente pudicum . . . ." ibid., 241.

"holy Petrarch," two acceptable poets according to Wimpheling, for they had both said that Ovid had been "dangerous, licentious and lecherous." Locher also asked forgiveness for claiming that the writings of Juvenal were just as credible as those of Paul and the Scriptures. Worst of all, he confessed that he had scandalized young boys by speaking of the sex act with filthy words which had "incited and inflamed them to obscene longing."[41]

To Wimpheling, Locher's second major "sin" was his pride and vanity. Locher confessed he had always demanded first place in University processionals and had also offended "both the head of the arts faculty and the serious men and licentiates of all the other faculties." He admitted such behavior was particularly unfitting, for he was no true scholar, but only a poet laureate, "having no degree except in poetry, i.e., in the art of metrification, in telling tales of the gentiles, and in expounding certain poets—things teachers in local schools do every day."[42] Finally Locher admitted he was a poor teacher; he had "babbled away" on the letters of Ovid for six months without finishing, and had neglected Valerius Maximus and other more useful authors.

---

[41] "In proximum, si spurcis verbis scandalizavi pusillos ephoebos pueros loquens de actu venereo; si per hoc eos incitavi vel inflammavi ad libidinem. . . ." ibid., 240.

[42] ". . .cum tamen ego non sim nisi poeta laureatus i.e. qualemcumque gradum habens in poesi, h.l. in arte metrificandi, in enarrandis gentilium fabulis, in exponendis certis poetis quos magistri triviales in particularibus scolis quottidie. . .interpretantur." ibid., 242.

Wimpheling left Freiburg for Strasburg sometime in mid 1505, but Zasius and several other of Wimpheling's friends continued the harassment of Locher. Zasius, for example, began to give lectures on Plautus at the same hour that Locher lectured on Ovid and Vergil.[43] A bitter feud developed between the two men in which they attacked each other in poems and in their lectures.[44] On September 30, 1505, the University council ordered both men to end their verbal battle.[45] But Locher refused to settle down. He and a number of his students allegedly attacked a friend of Zasius, and he continued to lecture on Sundays and festival days even after the rector had ordered him to stop. In October he included several poems against Zasius and Wimpheling in his response to Ingolstadt's defense of Zingel. These attacks finally caused Wimpheling to again take a hand in the affair. In December 1505, he wrote the Freiburg University council to complain about Locher's behavior. He threatened that unless Locher was silenced, he would publish one of Locher's letters "in which he filthily described the Bavarian women, and the society and pleasure he boasted to have had with them." He would also tell how he had "provoked, incited and inflamed five youths to sexual longing and dissipation with more obscene words than Martial and Catullus had ever used."[46]

---

[43] Schmidt, Histoire litéraire d'Alsace, I, 61.

[44] Several of these poems are published by Schmidt, ibid., I, 60.

[45] "30. Sept. 1505. Fuit mandata pax poetae Philomuso et Zasio, in forma communi ut moris est." Schreiber, op. cit., I, 77.

Finally, partly as a result of Locher's own excesses, partly as a result of pressure from Wimpheling and his followers, the University decided to terminate Locher's contract. On March 30, 1506, the council announced that Locher's salary would continue only to April 23. Until then he was ordered to cease lecturing and "live in peace."[47] But then, in what is surely the most perplexing aspect of the whole affair, the University of Ingolstadt rehired Locher for his old position. Only a year and a half before, this same University had published a pamphlet against Locher; the person the pamphlet defended, Zingel, was still teaching in the faculty of theology. The University records tell nothing of conflict or debate on the matter. Apparently the Bavarian governemnt played the key role in Locher's rehiring. Already on March 16, 1505, Duke Albert of Bavaria had petitioned the University to rehire Locher at a salary of eighty guldens, substantially more than the amount he had previously received.[48] Then in late April and early May the University council made two separate decisions: the first gave Locher permission to begin lecturing; the second approved the recommended salary.[49]

---

[46] "alioquin ipse me coget publicare vel unam solam epistolam, manu sua scriptam, quae apud me est, quam dedit olim ex Ingolstat ad magistrum Friburgensem, in qua describit mulieres Bavaras turpiter, turpius earum societatem & consuetudinem, quam cum eis se habuisse gloriatur, turpissime quinqui adolescentes nominatim provocat, incitat & inflammat ad libidinem & ad luxuriandum, turpioribus, inquam, & obscoenioribus verbis, quam Martialis aut Catullus unquam usus sit. . . ." Printed by Josef Riegger, Amoenitates Literareae Friburgenses, II, 170, 171.

[47] Schreiber, op. cit., I, 81.

What makes Locher's return to Ingolstadt even more puzzling is that before 1506 was even over he published still another work against scholastic theology, usually known as his Camparatio mulae ad musam.[50] It was a hodge-podge collection of poems, letters and woodcuts and was substantially longer than the thin pamphlets he had directed against Zingel. Yet this did not seem to upset anyone at Ingolstadt, and it did not affect his position. Perhaps the book's milder language and its lack of personal insult made the book less offensive to the Ingolstadt professors. It was not simply a personal attack on a single individual. There were occasional references to a "loquacious old theologian" who had attacked the poets, but for the most part, Locher had a more ambitious goal—to criticize scholastic theology in general.[51]

---

[48] Bauch, Die Anfänge des Humanismus in Ingolstadt, 75,76.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Continentur in hoc opuscula. . .Vitiosa sterilis Mulae ad Musam roscida lepidate praedictam Comparatio, etc. . . . (Nuremberg: Weissenburger, 1506).

Although Locher's work was no masterpiece, it at least added a new twist to humanist-scholastic debates by including art work with the text. Locher had hired an artist (obviously not Dürer) who summarized the main themes with woodcuts. The first two (see Plate I) show the comparison made throughout the work between the "sterile mule theologians" and the eloquent and productive muses. On one page the artist has shown the muses sitting around Apollo in a scene of pastoral serenity; on the opposite page, a dour scholastic theologian is following a seedy mule labeled "master." A "loquacious magpie" (pica loquax) sits on the mule and the theologian follows behind holding a basket the mule is filling up with excrement. The title of the woodcut reads, "the number of dullards is infinite."[52] Later, a larger woodcut (see Plate II) depicted "queen theology riding in a triumphal chariot." She wears a crown which symbolizes the seven liberal arts and is surrounded by thirty six figures who are performing various tasks. Moses drives the wagon, which is drawn by five horses symbolizing the Biblical books he wrote. Three Old Testament poets sit in the chariot. The prophets, the four evangelists, Gregory

---

[51] Locher gave no hints about the identity of this "old theologian;" he may very well have been referring to Wimpheling rather than Zingel.

[52] "Tardorum infinitis est numerus," Comparatio, A iii.

Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose and figures symbolizing the books of the Bible surround the central characters. In contrast to this woodcut, another (see Plate III) shows five scholastic theologians (dubbed Sophiscater, Mostophagus, Misophoebus, Microsius and Logicorax) who are in a field flailing away at several bundles of straw. In the accompanying dialogue the reader learns these were the theologians who knew nothing of the Bible, who used confused and worthless sources, who cited Paul only over their wine cups, who scorned the Church fathers, who relied on confused and worthless sources and who made more difficulties than they solved.[53]

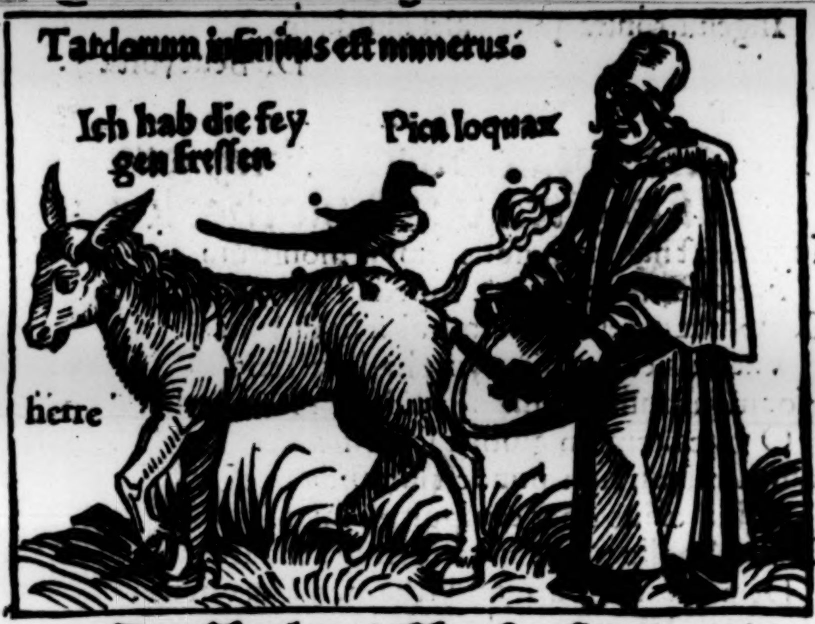
In the written sections of the book, Locher used several literary devices to set forth his ideas. There were poems on a variety of subjects. One appealed to the poets of Europe to combine against their enemies among the scholastics. Another exempted all "sincere theologians" from his attacks.[54] And at the end of the work he reprinted the four poems about Jerome, Augustine, Gregory and Ambrose, which he had already published in his Theologia Emphasis. He also included several letters which explained his motives for writing

---

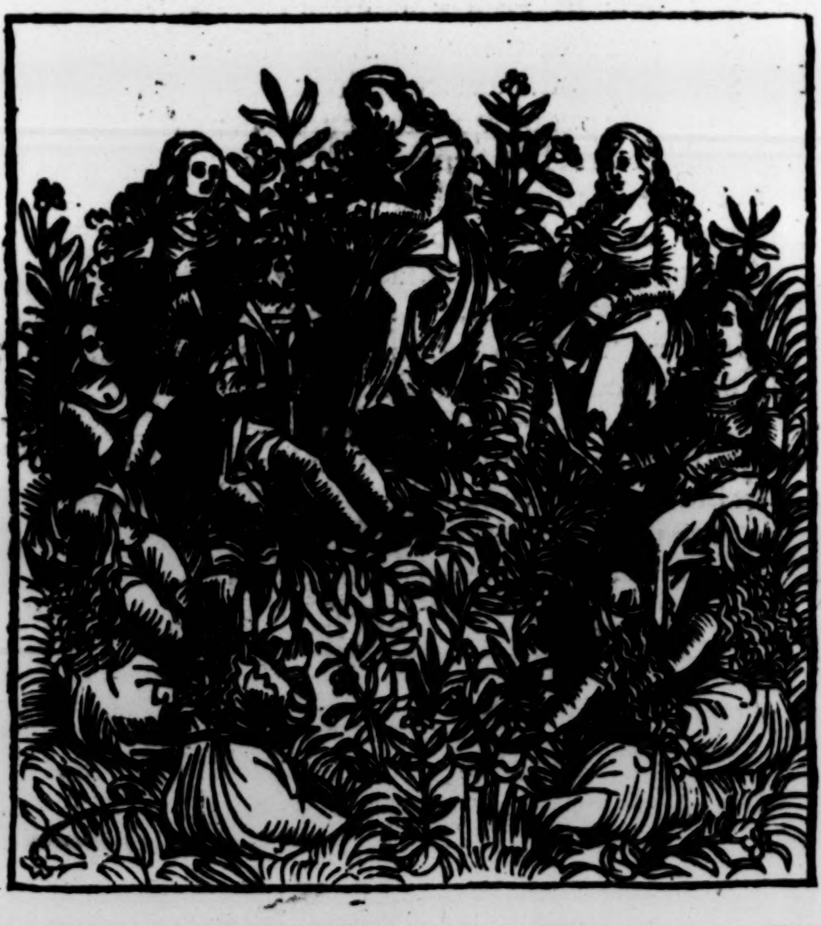
[53] ". . .qui theologie sacrarium non frequentant, qui penetralia legis veteris non intrant qui prophetas nom rimantur, qui bibliam non lectitant, psalmorum harmoniam, qui tamen claves sunt theosophie celicae, nec cantant, . . .Paulum vix inter pocula allegant, Solomonis libros vix a limite salutant, quattuor columnas romane sedis ac pontificii throni contemnunt. . . ." ibid, D.

[54] "Philomusi Clamor ad poetas ubique gentium degentes de Mulotheologo," A iv. "Excusatio Philomusi apud sinceros theologos."

PLATE I

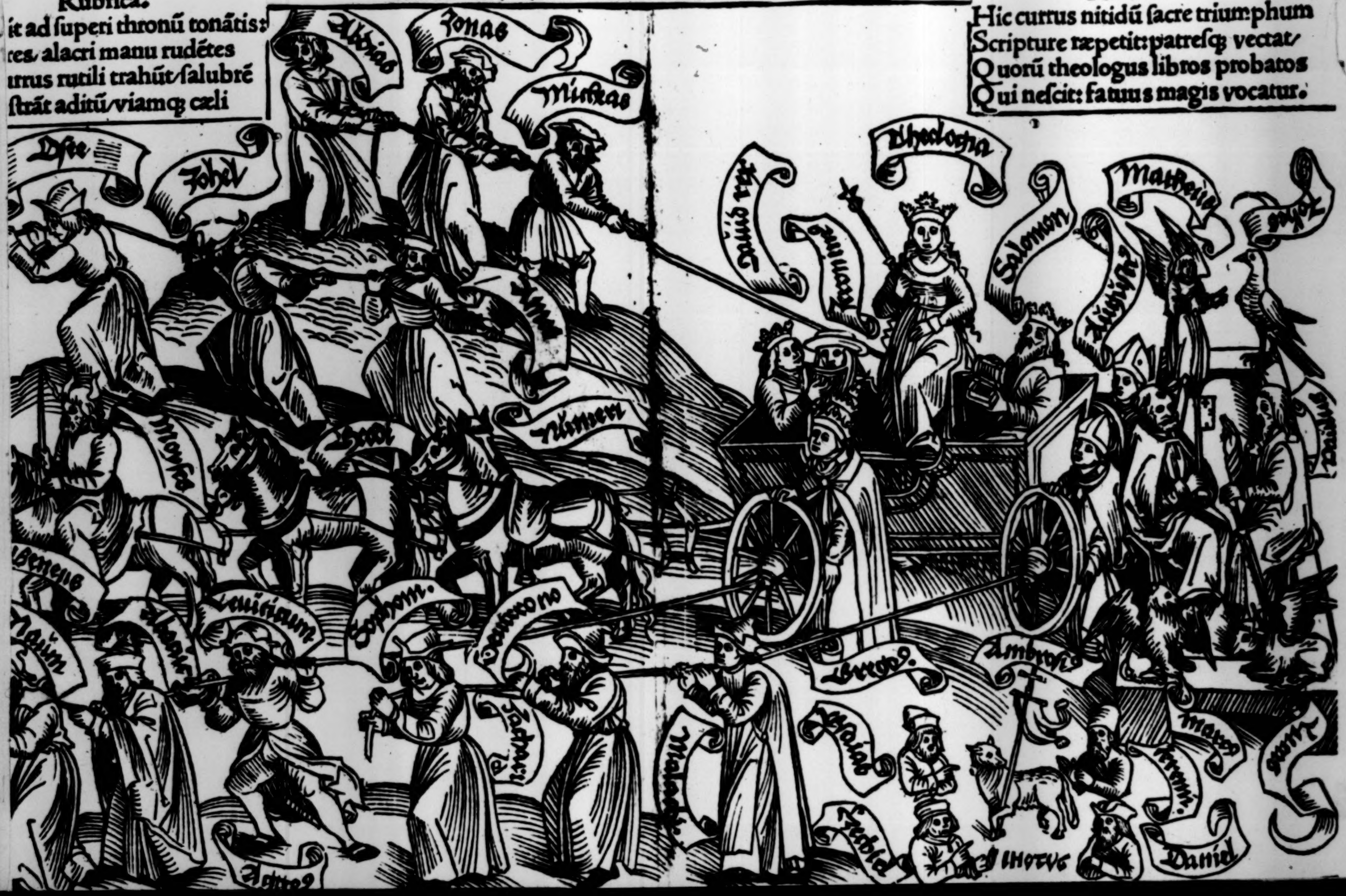

Tardorum infinitus eſt numerus.
Ich hab die feygen freſſen
Pica loquax
herre

De Mula. et Muſa. Compatio vitioſa philomuſi.



COMPARATIO MULAE AD MUSAM

PLATE II, QUEEN THEOLOGY'S TRIUMPH



Rubrica.

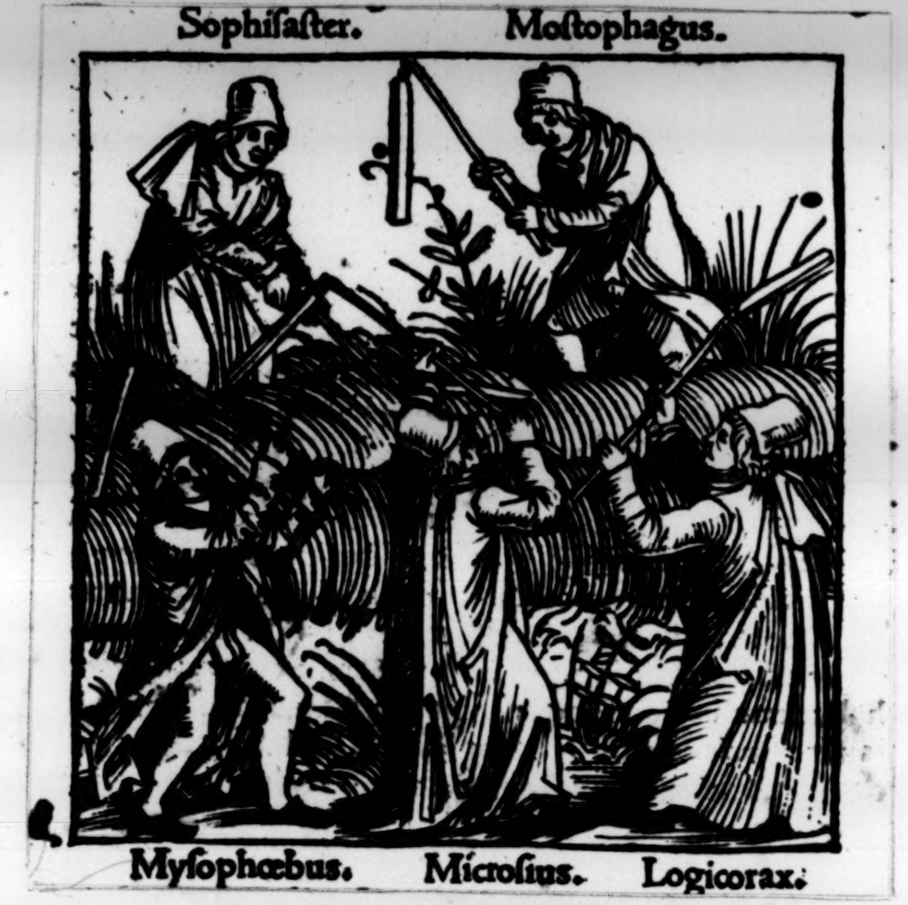
it ad ſuperi thronũ tonãtis:
tes alacri manu rudẽtes
urrus rutili trahũt/ſalubrẽ
ſtrãt aditũ/viamq̧ cæli

Rubrica

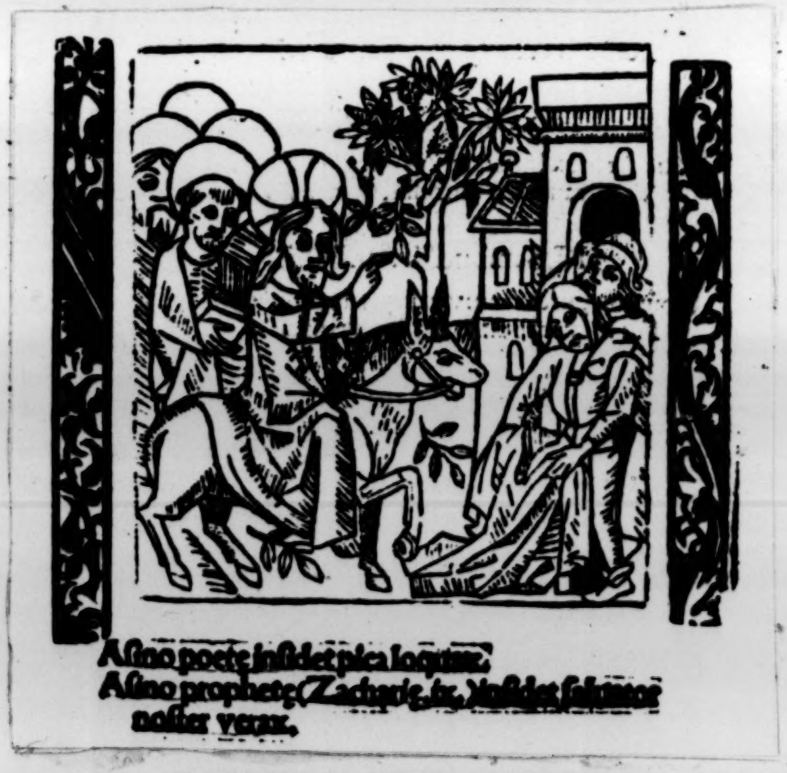
Hic currus nitidũ ſacre triumphum
Scripture ræpetit: patreſq̧ vectat/
Quorũ theologus libros probatos
Qui neſcit: fatuus magis vocatur.

Oſee
Johel
Abdias
Jonas
Micheas
Moyſes
Theologia
Dauid rex
Salomon
Mattheus
Johes
Lucas
Marcus
Jeronim.
Daniel
Ambroſi9
Gregori9
Iſaias
Ezechiel
Malachie
Zachari
Sophon.
Leuiticum
Geneſis
Naum

PLATE III


Sophiſaſter.
Moſtophagus.
Myſophœbus.
Microſius.
Logicorax.

FIVE THEOLOGIANS FROM
LOCHER'S COMPARATIO


Aſino poetę inſidet pica loquax.
Aſino prophetę (Zacharię. ix.) inſidet ſaluator
noſter verax.

FRONTPIECE OF WIMPHELING'S
CONTRA TURPEM LIBELLUM

and contained the usual anti-scholastic rhetoric. In the introductory letter, for example, he explained that he had written the book not out of personal ambition but only because a "certain unreliable theologian" had slandered poetry. He added that this theologian had "numerous followers and disciples who knew nothing beyond the rude little verses of Alexander Gallus, the modes of signification and worthless offensive grammatical rules."[55] He cited passages from Plato, Aristotle and the Church fathers which had been favorable to the study of poetry.

The most imaginative section in the work, and the one which contained the strongest attacks on scholasticism was the "Mutual Exhortation of Calliope and Apollo," in which they discuss the attack on poetry made by a certain "slanderous" and "stinking" old man. Apollo first sang the praise of all the great poets of Greece and Rome. He mentioned Homer, Hesiod, Vergil, Lucan, Statius, Terence, Plautus and others. He argued that all these men were theologians in that they taught the "rewards of virtue and the aversion to crime." And he added that no Christian could deny this except certain theologians whose only interests were "minute trifles, foolish words and logical traps." He argued further that no theologian was completely learned if he had not studied poetry, and added that the usual authorities, Occam, Buridan, Scotus, Marsilius, Manfelt, Burleus, Brulifer, Holcot, and Bricot, only taught theologians how to "dispute in words" and "bind together logical nets."[56] It is interesting that every scholastic theologian mentioned was a nominalist; the work contained no attacks on the older "realists," such as Aquinas, Albertus and Bonaventure. In the concluding section of his poetical oration, Apollo compared the benefits offered by the muses and "mule theology." From the latter, nothing is gained, "but stinking filth, from which a crude and garrulous theologian is born, who swells with spite, who always spreads strife and who is ruined by dark furies."[57] In comparison, the muses gain powerful kings for peace, instruct magistrates in justice, cause pleasant speech, and have produced great religious writers such as David, Solomon, the holy prophets, Saint Bernard and John Gerson; the latter is called a worthy, but

---

[55] ". . .habet enim plerosque sectatores atque conscios maledicentiae sue preter rudes Alexandri galli versiculos, preter modos significandi & futiles ramidasque grammatices triviales regulas. . ." ibid., A ivb.

---

[56] "Non est theologus perfectus semine phoebi
Castalio pariter qui ve furore caret
Non est theologus se quem Buridanus & Ockan
Aut Scotinus tantum digladiando parit.
Marsilius, Manfelt, Burleus, Brulifer, Holkot
Atque Bricot logices retia sola legant."
ibid., B iia

[57] Mula aliquid gignit. quid? stercora foeda. quid inde?
Theologus crudus nascitur atque loquax.
Qui livore tumet, qui toto tempore lites
Seminat & furiis precipitatur atris."
ibid., B iii.

"abandoned theologian."

For all its pretentiousness and repetion, Locher's Comparatio was an important event in the history of German humanism. It was the first published book by a German humanist whose main purpose was to attack scholastic theology. But it offered few constructive suggestions for the improvement of religious writing other than the unoriginal demands that theologians study less logic and imitate the Church fathers. There were a few passages which urged the theologians to devote more time to Biblical study. But there was no new conception of the theologian as teacher of common people; and there was no demand for the knowledge of Greek and Hebrew.

Locher's earlier attacks on George Zingel had brought an immediate response from the faculties of arts and theology at Ingolstadt. But there was no direct reply to his Comparatio until 1510. And when it appeared, it was the conservative humanist, Jacob Wimpheling again who was the author. Wimpheling's attitude toward pagan poetry and its defenders became increasingly negative after the appearance of Locher's anti-scholastic pamphlet. In his 1507 edition of the Speculum animae of Henry of Langenstein, the fifteenth-century nominalist theologian, he included several attacks on the poets. He published a letter by Johann Campanus which demeaned poetry and added one of his own which advised all future priests to avoid it.[58] He also attacked the arrogance of one "wild ass" who had "most shamefully stung good theologians." He warned such attacks would not go unpunished.

The reference to "punishing the wild ass" shows that Wimpheling already contemplated a response to Locher in 1507. Sometime afterwards he drew up a list of twenty-four propositions from Locher's book which he considered heretical or close to it.[59] Wimpheling never saw fit to publish his list, and since he repeated most of his objections in later works, there is no need to closely review the list.

The long controversy came to a close in 1510 with the publication of Wimpheling's Contra turpem libellum philomusi, theologie scholasticaë & neotericorum defensio.[60] In part, Wimpheling's wrok was a personal attack on Locher. In the second chapter he expressed approval of "Vergil, Baptista Mantuanus and other Christian poets." But he strongly attacked poets such as Locher "who read something of the poets for a stipend, and who in the space of a whole hour scarcely explain six or eight lines with profit."[61] They offer only "trifles, bombast

---

[58] Printed by Riegger, Amoenitates Litterariae, II, 307.

[59] Printed by Schlecht, op. cit., 243-245

[60] (Nuremberg: Weissenburg, 1510), as a response to Locher's "mule theme," the frontpiece depicted Christ riding into Jerusalem on a mule. See Plate III.

[61] "Id autem apprime detestor quod nonnulli qui poeticam proficientur cum poetarum quempiam pro stipendio legunt vix in totius horae spatio sex aut octo versus utiliter explicant." ibid., A iib.

and filth" which endanger the youthful innocence of their listeners. Furthermore teachers like Locher filled their lectures with "histrionic gestures and effeminate shrieking" —behavior which encouraged large crowds, but was "utterly unsuitable for serious men." In a later chapter he argued that such one-sided poets had no place in universities and it was foolish for emperors to honor these men with "laurel crowns."[62]

Wimpheling stressed that he did not intend to denounce all poetry. To prove this, he compiled a list of contemporary German writers who culitvated poetry, but who were still acceptable. He included the leading figures in German humanism, most of whom probably took little pleasure in finding themselves listed in a book which defended scholastic theology: Reuchlin, Brant, Buschius, Bebel, Aesticampianus, Eobanus Hessus, Beatus Rhenanus and even Ortwin Gratius, the unfortunate victim of the Letters of the Obscure Men.[63] These men, wrote Wimpheling, used their poetical talents for "eradicating corruption, commending virtue, extolling saints, praising writers of honorable things and composing the epitaphs of famous men."

---

[62] Chapter IV: "Poetas a priscis imperatoribus spretos laureamque poeticam magnum aliquem gradum falso existimari, & ob id nudos poetas ad concillia in universitatibus stultissime admitti." ibid., A iii.

[63] Discussed in Chapter VI. of Defensio.

But for all his protestations, Wimpheling's arguments tended to deny that poetry had any usefulness whatsoever. Such was the main thrust of Chapter III, entitled "That poets are entirely unuseful to the Christian commenwealth and state in every matter." He pointed out that many great leaders and writers of the past had never read poetry, and added that poetry offered no preparation for disciplines such as law and medicine. Then he went on to a thorough survey of its worthlessness:

> . . .if someone is weak in body, he calls a physician, not a poet; if the work is to plead a lawsuit, a jurist is present not a poet; if someone in the cure of souls or chancelery must be counseled a theologian is sought not a poet; if someone desires the judgement of a priest or a censor of morals, he summons a lawyer schooled in sacred letters; if a legate must be sent somewhere, an eloquent, pure and truthful orator or speaker is chosen, not a mangy and trifling poet and teller of stories. If an appropriate teacher is sought for the sons of princes and nobles no libidinous, proud, irascible or raving poet must be chosen, but rather a modest moral philosopher, a humble historian or a theologian, serene and gentle in spirit.

It was quite clear, Wimpheling concluded, that poetry had no usefulness at all.[64]

---

[64] Nam si quispiam corpore languet, meidcum vocat, non poetam. Si causae defensore opus est, jureconsultum adit, non poeta. Si animarum curae, si cancellis consulendum est, theologus quaeritur, non poeta. Si antistes judicem, si morum censorem. . .desiderat, jureperitum & in sacris literis doctum accersit. Si nuncius alio mittendum est, orator aut peruasor eloquens integer & verax eligitur, non poeta scabrosus levis ac fabularum narrator. Si nobillissimorum principum filiis preceptor idoneus queritur, eligendus est non libidinosus, non superbus, non iracundus aut furiosus poeta, sed pudicus moralis philosophus, humilis historicus & theologus animo serenus atque mansuetus." _ibid_., A iii.

Wimpheling's actual defense of scholastic theology was unimaginative. His main argument, which he repeated constantly, was that logic and dialectic were rightfully the foundation for theological discourse. He stressed that without these disciplines, no theologian could refute heresy with any success. To show the respectability of dialectical argumentation, he cited several Biblical authors, who, in Wimpheling's opinion, used the scholastic modus quaestionum in their writing. He claimed that Paul in Romans and Luke both used this method, but a reading of these two books does not immediately point up the passages he had in mind. However he did name one specific passage, from Malachi I:6:

> A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you.

With all due respect for Wimpheling, these citations have to be among the weakest arguments offered by anyone in the humanist-scholastic controversies. Surely even he knew that the mere use of a question mark did not make a person a scholastic theologian. For the remainder of his defense, Wimpheling catalogued a long list of scholastics from Lombard to Gabriel Biel, who either through their writings or personal lives had been "columns" of the Church. The eight nominalists whom Locher had specifically named in his Comparatio came in for special praise. Interspersed in all of this were more attacks on the worthless "ape-like lovers of poetry."

Wimpheling's publication in 1510 brought an end to the quarrels which had been started in 1504 with Locher's attack on Zingel. Locher, who had settled back into his old job at Ingolstadt wanted no further wrangling. Sometime after 1510, when he heard that a Nuremberg printer intended to republish Wimpheling's Contra turpem libellum, he dashed off a letter to Pirckheimer urging him to intercede and prevent a second edition.[65] Either Pirckheimer or something else changed the printer's mind, for no second edition ever appeared.

Like the dispute between Wimpina and Polich, personalities played an important role in the Locher-Wimpheling-Zingel controversy. Wimpheling's accusations aside, Locher's pamphlet and his stubborn behavior at Freiburg are indication enough of his flamboyant and pompous personality—one which easily made enemies. But the feud was also symptomatic of the changes in German humanism after 1500.

Both Wimpheling and Zingel had felt comfortable with the humanism of the 1480's and 90's; Zingel was interested in the new methods of teaching grammar and got along well with Celtis; Wimpheling was an enthusiastic grammar reformer and worked for the introduction of humanist lectures at Heidelberg. Both men believed in its compatability with scholasticism and in the teaching of "virtuous" poets and orators. But it is not surprising that they found the ideas of young Locher both extravagant and dangerous. In their eyes, his devotion to pagan literature subverted morals, and his assaults on scholastic theology dangerously undermined Church tradition. The war of pamphlets occurred when conflicts in personality were exacerbated by differences in ideology.

---

[65] Pirckheimer, Briefwechsel, II, 52.

CHAPTER VII

HUMANISM AND THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Before 1500 the scholastics had greeted humanism with neither boundless enthusiasm nor bitter opposition. Some questioned the need for courses on classical literature, but as long as such courses attracted few students, and as long as old requirements remained in tact, most of them tolerated the teachers of poetry and rhetoric. But by 1500, humanism in Germany was no longer the weak and ineffectual movement it had been throughout most of the fifteenth century. German printers had spread humanist ideas to a wide audience and had made it seem easy to obtain the writings of classical authors. Humanist ideas were themselves changing, and criticisms of scholasticism now included attacks on traditional methods in both philosophy and theology. More important, the disciples of humanism had grown in both numbers and self-confidence. Would these changes affect the relationship between the humanists and the scholastics at the German universities? The following chapter will seek to answer this question.

The new century was marked by the founding of two universities in northeast Germany, at Wittenberg and Frankfurt-am-Oder. In most respects the two institutions retained the same course of scholastic studies which had dominated the German universities since the late fourteenth century. But neither school faced the obstacles which had hindered the acceptance of humanism at other universities—a long academic tradition and a group of older, conservative professors who opposed change. As a result, both Wittenberg and Frankfurt supplemented the scholastic disciplines with courses on humanist grammar, rhetoric and poetry.

At Wittenberg, Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony made two men responsible for establishing the structure and curriculum of the new school.[1] The first, Martin Polich von Mellerstadt, was the physician who had disputed with Wimpina over theology and poetry. The second, Johann von Staupitz, was an Augustinian who had taught scholastic theology at Tübingen before coming to Wittenberg.[2] Neither man was a humanist, but both were familiar with humanist ideas and moderately sympathetic to them. The Tübingen background of Staupitz explains the almost literal adoption of the Tübingen statutes by the new Saxon school. The requirements for degrees in the faculty of arts included the same course work which northern European students had been studying for two and a half centuries.[3] For the Bachelor of Arts a student had to hear five required lectures, all on logic: the *Isagoge* of Porphyry, and the *Predicaments*, *Posterior Analytics*, *Prior Analytics* and *Topics*, all by Aristotle; they also had to attend exercises on the *Physics* of Aristotle and the *Parva logicalia* of Peter of Spain. Candidates for the Master of Arts had to hear lectures on the remaining Aristotelian writings: *Physics*, *De caelo et mundo*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *De anima*, *Metaphysics*, *Ethics*, and the *Parva naturalia*; further exercises were required on Aristotle's *Ethics* and the *Parva naturalia*.

---

[1] Walter Friedensburg, *Geschichte der Universität Wittenberg* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1917); Gustav Bauch, "Wittenberg und die Scholastik," *Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte*, XVIII (1897), 285-339; Maria S. Grossman, "Humanism at Wittenberg 1486-1517"(unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Dept. of History, Radcliffe College, 1959); Max Steinmetz, "Die Wittenberger Universität und der Humanismus," *450 Jahre Martin-Luther-Universität*, I (Leipzig: Leipziger Grossbuchbinderei, 1952), 103-140; Walter Friedensburg, ed., *Urkundenbuch der Universität Wittenberg*, I (Magdeburg: Historische Kommission, 1926).

[2] "Johann von Staupitz," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, XXXV (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1893), 529-533.

Although humanist courses on poetry and rhetoric were not required for degrees, they were made available to students from the start. Hermann Buschius, the wandering poet from Westphalia, was the first salaried humanist lecturer.[4] He delivered an oration for the opening ceremonies at Wittenberg and afterwards lectured on Ovid's Metamorphoses; but for some reason he gave up his position in the spring of 1503.

---

[3] Theodor Muther, ed., "Die ersten Statuten der Wittenberger Artistenfakultät," *Neue Mitteilungen aus dem Gebiet historischantiquarischer Forschungen*, XII (1874), 176-208.

[4] Friedensburg, *Geschichte*, 69, 70; Hermann Liessem, *Hermann von dem Busche. Sein Leben und seine Schriften*. *Programm des Kaiser Wilhelm-Gymnasium zu Köln* (1884-1889, 1905-1908); see previous chapter for role in Polich-Wimpina feud.

There is no indication that scholastic opposition to humanism drove Buschius from Wittenberg. A document from 1507 shows that other teachers continued to lecture on the humanities after he left. This document was the Rotulus doctorum Wittenbergae, a list of Wittenberg professors drawn up by Christoph Scheurl, a member of the law faculty.[5] In the hope of attracting scholars to the new school, Scheurl published the catalogue along with a brief introduction about the University. The Rotulus listed three men who gave lectures in humanis litteris. The first was a Hessian, Balthasar Phaccus, who received his Master of Arts from Wittenberg in 1503. He apparently had taken over the position relinquished by Buschius. In 1507 he is listed as lecturing twice a day on three different authors: Vergil, Sallust and Valerius Maximus. Although Ulrich von Hutten later called him "the glory of the fatherland," Phaccus was an uninspiring man who never wrote anything himself.[6] He seems to have been entirely happy with his life at Wittenberg, for he taught there until his death in 1541. Two other men gave courses on the studia humanitatis. Scheurl listed himself as lecturing on Suetonius in the arts faculty and on the usus feudorum in the law faculty. Finally Georgius Sibutus, designated as poeta et orator laureatus, lectured on Sylius italicus, a book on the Punic War, and on Silvula de Situ altiorem urbis, a descriptive dialogue he had written on the city of Wittenberg. Whether Sibutus also received a stipend from the government is not known.

---

[5] Printed by Georg Kaufmann, Geschichte der deutschen Universitäten, II, 573-580.

[6] Ulrich von Hutten, "Ad poetas germanos," Operia omnia, III, ed. Eduard Böcking (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1862), 67.

Although the University modified its statutes in 1508, the original degree requirements were not altered. But as a result of actions by individual professors, changes did take place. In 1507, for example, Johannes Crispus began giving grammar lessons based on a text written by the Roman grammarian, Johannes Sulpitius. Crispus published the text, and in the dedication, he expressed satisfaction that after three hundred years of barbarism, students were finally receiving sound training in grammar.[7] In 1509, Kilian Reuther, another member of the arts faculty, published Argyropulus's new translation of Aristotle's De anima, and adopted it for his courses. In the introduction, he claimed to have chosen the book "because it was written in the pristine splendor of Roman eloquence." But the edition also contained a commentary by Thomas Aquinas. For Reuther there was no contradiction in utilizing the new humanist translation while retaining the scholastic methods of exposition.[8] It was also possible for Wittenberg students to receive informal instruction in Greek in the early sixteenth century. Nicholas Marschalk, a law student, gave private lessons between 1502 and 1505. He had come to Wittenberg from Erfurt, where he had already helped edit a number of works on poetry, Latin grammar and Greek.[9] After his departure, two others, Hermann Trebelius and Telemann Conradi, also gave private lessons on Greek.[10] There is no information on the number of students they attracted.

---

[7] Posterior editio Sulpitiana in partes tres divisa. . . , (Wittenberg: 1506); Bauch, "Wittenberg. . . ," 309-310.

Although there is less documentation on the early history of Frankfurt-am-Oder, it appears that humanist influence on the school's formal organization was stronger than at Wittenberg.[11] Brandenburg's new university was modeled on Leipzig, and over two thirds of the original faculty came from the older institution. Although the oldest statutes from 1506 have been lost, it is certain that the original faculty included two humanists who received stipends from Joachim I, the Brandenburg Elector.[12] Publicus Vigilantius, who came to Frankfurt from Erfurt, delivered the opening oration and later lectured on Horace. His colleague, Johannes Aesticampianus, a more important figure in the history of German humanism, stayed at Frankfurt for only two years. He had an interest in religious and ethical problems, and he lectured on these subjects at several German universities. At Frankfurt, for example, he lectured not only on grammar, but also on moral philosophy.[13] Neither humanist was registered in the matriculation book, which meant they were not considered regular members of the arts faculty.

---

[8] *Liber de anima Aristotelis, nuper per Johannem Agrilopilum de graeco in latinum sermonem elegantissime traductus cum commentariolis divi Thomai Aquinatis. . .*(Wittenberg: 1509).

[9] "Nicholaus Marschalk," *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, XX (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1884), 431, 432.

[10] Steinmetz, *op. cit.*, 117.

[11] Paul Reh, ed., "Die allgemeinen Statuten der Universität Frankfurt-am-Oder, 1510-1610," *Jahresbericht der Slesischen Gesellschaft für vaterländische Cultur*, 75 (1897), 2-102; Gustav Bauch, *Die Anfänge der Universität Frankfurt a.O.* (Berlin: J. Harrwitz, 1900).

Two documents from 1512 clearly show the position of humanism at Frankfurt after the school had been operating for six years. The Nova ordinatio gave the time and lecturer for the courses offered by the University, and the Ordinatio pro gradibus listed those which were required for degrees.[14] Both documents show that Aristotelian writings on logic and philosophy still served as the basis of instruction; no mention was made about using new humanist translations. The Nova ordinatio, however, listed regular courses on grammar and rhetoric, and the Ordinatio pro gradibus confirms that both courses were mandatory for all students. Cicero and Aristotle were the texts used for rhetoric; Perotti or Sulpitius, rather than the Doctrinale, was used for Latin grammar. The Ordinatio pro gradibus also made provision for regular lectures on poetry. But each listed lecture was followed by the phrase Quod est placiti, which meant it was up to the student whether or not he wanted to attend. As had been the custom elsewhere, regular members of the arts faculty rather than the salaried humanists taught the required courses on grammar and rhetoric. The lectures of Vigilantius and Hermann Trebelius, the humanist who took the place of Aesticampianus, were listed separately from the other arts faculty courses and took place in the lecture hall of the jurists. In other words, the faculty of arts had adopted parts of the humanist program, but it still had not integrated the humanists into its formal structure.

---

[12] Bauch, Die Anfänge der Universität Frankfurt a.O., 98.

[13] On Aesticampianus, see below, 299-310.

[14] Gustav Bauch, ed., Acten und Urkunden der Universität Frankfurt a.O., VI (Breslau: M.& H. Marcus, 1906).

Thus scholastic methods continued to dominate the teaching at Wittenberg and Frankfurt, but humanism influenced the instruction offered by both schools. Students still devoted most of their time to dialectic, but opportunities were also available for the study of classical rhetoric and poetry. Both institutions hired salaried humanist lecturers, and for a few courses new humanist texts were utilized.

At several of the older German universities progress was much less spectacular. At Heidelberg, for example, humanism made no discernable impact on the University in the early sixteenth century. Wimpheling's efforts to improve grammar teaching may have influenced some of the young instructors, but the University records show that no attempts were made to officially adopt new texts or methods. After Wimpheling left the school in 1501, there was no one to give regular lectures on humanist subjects. When Phillip Melanchthon later described his studies at Heidelberg from 1509 to 1511, he recalled that "nothing was publicly taught there besides that garrulous dialectic and small portions of physics." He added that what he had learned of the poets, orators and historians resulted from his own private reading.[15] But by 1513 there were groups at the University which hoped to improve the status of humanism. In September, the arts faculty petitioned the University council to hire a public lecturer in *politores litteras*, arguing that such a step had already brought "fame and advantages" to other institutions.[16] Although the appeal went unheeded, this petition was nevertheless a significant document. Here is a case of scholastic professors appealing not for the limitation of humanist teaching, but rather for its introduction. The petition indicates that the young members of the arts faculty, who had received most of their education after 1500, were sympathetic to humanism and believed regular lectures on classical literature would improve the University. The petition's denial reflects the domination of the council by older professors who were still hesitant to make humanist innovations. This "generational split" helps explain why humanism did not make greater headway at Heidelberg and other German universities in the early sixteenth century.

---

[15] ". . . missus sum puer adhuc in Academiam, ubi cum adolescentibus nihil publice traderetur praeter illam garrulam Dialecticen, et particulum Physices; quia didicerem versiculos connectere, quadam aviditate puerili coepi legere Poetas, et ut postulat res, adjunxi historiarum et fabularum lectionem. Haec me consuetudo paulatim deduxit ad autores veteres." Phillip Melanchthon, *Opera Omnia*, IV, ed. Charles Bretschneider (Halle: C.A. Schwetschke, 1837), 715.

[16] Winckelmann, *Urkundenbuch der Universität Heidelberg*, II, 70, 71.

The other universities of northern Germany continued to lag behind in their assimilation of humanism. At Greifswald, humanism gained official recognition only in 1514 when the Pomeranian Prince, Bogislav X, brought in a minor humanist poet, Johannes Hadus to give lectures on classical literature.[17] He left Greifswald after one year, and went on to the University of Rostock, where he was also the school's first humanist to receive a regular stipend.[18] At Cologne no attempts were made to establish a humanist lectureship. The only mention made of humanism in official documents came in 1508, when the theological faculty sent out a circular which attacked the teaching of pagan and certain modern poets; it recommended that only Vergil and the early Christian poets be used at the University.[19] The sending of this circular suggests that some humanist instruction was taking place at Cologne. In fact several men gave courses on classical literature in this period and others gave private lessons in Greek.[20] Johannes Caesarius was the best known teacher of Greek, while Hermann Buschius was the most eminent instructor in rhetoric and poetry. Since the latter's arrival coincided with the publication of the theologians' circular, it may have been aimed directly at him. Whatever the case, he stayed in Cologne for almost a decade despite the frequent complaints about enemies and the lack of students which he included in several works.[21] He taught a wide variety of subjects, and in 1512 and 1513 even gave courses on moral philosophy.[22] Nothing he wrote suggested that this aspect of his teaching especially infringed upon the Cologne scholastics.

---

[17] The University council recorded as follows: "Johannes Hadus poeta huc missus per illustrissimum principem Boguslaum, ut interpretaretur oratores et poetas; nihil dedit quia universitas eum honoravit." Johann Kosegarten, Geschichte der Universität Greifswald, I, 167.

[18] Otto Krabbe, Die Universität Rostock, 192.

---

[19] Hermann Keussen, "Regesten und Auszüge. . . ," 337.

[20] Hermann Keussen, Die Alte Universität Köln, 191-196.

[21] See especially the introduction to his edition of Proserpina: Claudiani Proserpinae captus cum Hermanni Buschii erudito ac familiari commentario (Cologne (?): 1514).

[22] For his courses he published a life of Seneca and an edition of Aristotle's Ethics.

Despite Mutian's presence at nearby Gotha, the status of humanism at the University of Erfurt was no higher than at Cologne. No efforts were made to reform the curriculum and no salary was established for a humanist lecturer. In 1512 one of the young members of Mutian's circle was elected rector of the University,[23] but since the position carried little power, his election was hardly the "humanist triumph" some authors have claimed.[24] Private instruction on classical literature did take place at Erfurt and undoubtedly was on the increase. In 1509, in a passage already cited, Mutian congratulated the "young teachers for freeing themselves from barbarism."[25]

Even at the German universities where humanism had gained a stronger footing in the previous century, the proponents of reform failed to make any major breakthroughs. At Freiburg-im-Breisgau, the University faithfully filled the position of salaried humanist lecturer, but it did not make humanist courses required for degrees. The men who filled the position were minor figures who generally taught other courses in the arts or law faculty.[26] At Tübingen the prestigious Heinrich Bebel lectured on the humanities. His squabbles with the faculty of arts were limited to questions of salary, lecture hours and vacations. In 1510 and 1515, for example, he complained to the faculty that his course was scheduled at a time when one of the required subjects was being taught. In 1515, at least, the faculty turned down his request for a new time and ordered him to continue teaching at the same hour.[27] In 1512 he had a somewhat different dispute when he demanded that his vacation be extended to equal those taken by members of the higher faculties; the faculty of arts at first refused his request, but later agreed after the humanist appealed to the Württemberg government.[28] Such minor conflicts were hardly the cataclysmic humanist-scholastic battles which some authors have imagined.

---

[23] Georg Oergel, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Erfurter Humanismus," Mitteilungen des Vereins für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde von Erfurt, XV (1892), 32.

[24] Spitz, Religious Renaissance for the German Humanists, 135.

[25] Mutian, Briefwechsel, 113.

Neither Freiburg nor Tübingen made any attempt to officially adopt humanist grammars or new translations of Aristotle for required courses. At Tübingen, when the statutes of the faculty of arts were revised in 1505, the old curriculum was left unchanged, and rhetoric was not included among the required courses.[29] Furthermore Bebel's propaganda to reform Latin instruction seems to have had little result. In fact, it may have caused a negative reaction which led the University to confirm that old methods were to be retained. In 1505 a regulation on teaching in the burses was directed against "novelties in grammar teaching." Entitled "Against departures in the pedagogium," it made regular grammar study mandatory, but stipulated that the "parts of Alexander and Donatus" were to be used as the basis of instruction. It permitted teachers to use other texts, but only after Alexander and Donatus had been thoroughly covered.[30]

---

[26] Schreiber, Geschichte der Albert-Ludwigs Universität, I, 83-87.

[27] ". . .et continueare debet lectionem suam semper hora 3, donec universitas de una alia providerit sibi habenda," Haller, Anfänge der Universität Tübingen, II, 82.

[28] Ibid.

Something very similar happened at Freiburg, where a minor revision of the statutes of the faculty of arts also took place in 1505. The statutes made no changes in the traditional curriculum, and again attacked innovation in grammar teaching. "Strange authors and teaching" had confused the students, and this was "the mother of error." Therefore, teachers were ordered to continue the exclusive use of Alexander Villedieu and Donatus.[31]

---

[29] Roth, Urkunden zur Geschichte der Universität Tübingen, 335, 336.

[30] "Item volumus, quod in ambabus bursis et pedagogio juvenes imbuantur in exercicio grammaticali, in Donato et partibus Alexandri per juramentum, et quod tenens actus grammaticales non studeat nobitabibus. . . .Ibid., 416, 417.

[31] H. Ott and J.M. Fletcher, ed., The Medieval Statutes of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Freiburg-im-Breisgau (Notre Dame, Ind: University Press, 1964), 119).

Serious attempts to reform curriculum to suit humanist demands took place at only three German universities in the early sixteenth century. At one of them, Ingolstadt, the attempt was abortive. In 1507 the Bavarian government asked the four faculties to appoint representatives to meet with government officials and discuss possible changes in University practices. But the proposed changes dealt only with discipline and administration. Several professors had called for a change in Latin instruction and demanded that Priscian and Alexander Villedieu be put aside in favor of the grammar of Nicholas Perotti or Alexander Dati; they also recommended the study of Vergil or some other poet as an aid in grammar instruction. But the majority of the representatives opposed such changes, and as a result, Priscian and Alexander were retained.[32]

At the University of Vienna, the great reform attempts of the previous decade finally gained some concrete results in 1504. But in comparison to Perger's great expectations, the results were meager. They were restricted to grammar teaching alone, and even then, old methods were not entirely abandoned. The reforms, which were again initiated by the Austrian government, were approved by both the faculty of arts and the University council.[33] The new regulations demanded first that the grammar of Nicholas Perotti be lectured on for eighteen weeks during every academic year. Second, lectures on the first three parts of Alexander's Doctrinale were to be entirely discontinued. But the new statute made it clear that Alexander was still to play an important role in grammar teaching. Candidates for the Bachelor of Arts were required to attend special review classes on the very same parts of Alexander which were no longer to be lectured on. In the concluding section, however, it was demanded that instructors keep logical problems separate from their teaching of the Doctrinale. They were to treat the book "with clear and simple explanation," and were not to mention "logical and metaphysical concepts or the maddening and perplexing opinions about vocatives and gerunds." Also to be avoided were "long and erroneous commentaries, metaphysical modi significandi and the obscure meanings of rules." For whatever it was worth, the new statutes advised the teacher to treat the Doctrinale the way a "bee treated a flower."[34]

---

[32] Prantl, *Geschichte der Ludwig-Maximillians Universität*, 104-106; Bauch, *Die Anfänge des Humanismus in Ingolstadt*, 89.

---

[33] Printed by Kink, op. cit., II, 315-318, though with incorrect date of 1509.

[34] "Ordinamus atque serio concludimus statuentes: quilibet Magister Grammaticen discipulis traditurus Alexandri compendia lucida et familiarissima explanatione pueris tradat, atque ad Veterum consulta conclusaque nullam faciat prorsus mentionem, Ut aiunt, de Logicis et Metaphysicis Conceptibus, nec Vocatiui ac gerundiorum fanaticis atque perplexis opinionibus puerilem sensum tenuem hebetantibus. Omittat etiam

The change in grammar instruction was the last formal curriculum reform at Vienna until the 1520's. Johannes Cuspianus, Perger's replacement as superintendant, had a strong committment to humanist ideas, but his service to the Emperor took him away from Vienna for long periods and consequently he did not press any further changes on the University.[35] Nevertheless a number of Viennese arts professors began using new humanist translations of Aristotle for their courses. In 1505, for example, a certain Wolfgang Mosnauer edited Aristotle's *Physics* and *De anima* with the new translations of Argyropulus.[36] Other Viennese masters rejected the old scholastic treatment of moral philosophy and adopted commentaries by humanist authorities. As early as 1501 an anonymous Viennese professor published Aristotle's *Ethics* with the commentary by the French humanist, Jacques Lefèvre.[37] This same

---

nimiam, ut aiunt, figurarum prolixitatem, umbrosam atque difficilem magis quam idoneam latinitatem, Obscuras quoque Regiminum vires modosque significandi metaphoricos, longaque et mendosa in Alexandrum Donatumque cum suis Argumentationibus glossemata seu Commentaria, Casualium et temporalium infinitos anfractus. Utiliora tantum pueris ab Alexandro Ut apes ex flosculis decerpat, Doceatque Juuenes modo nomina, nunc verba flectendo atque iungendo latini et congrui sermonis inprimis habere rationem. Is enim Ultimus atque praecipuus Grammaticorum finis habeatur." *ibid*., 318.

[35] Aschbach, *op. cit*., II, 284-309.

[36] *Libri occto physicorum Aristotilis per Joannem Argyropulum e graeco in latinum traducti* (Vienna: Winterburg, 1505).

[37] *Compendiara in Aristotelis ethicen introductio rei litterarie studiosis apprime utiles. Jacobi Stapulensis*

edition was published again in 1513 by a professor named Martin Edlinger.[38] Two years later another teacher, Johannes de Stobniza, published Aristotle's Ethics, this time with the introduction by the Italian Leonardo Bruni.[39]

The Viennese Poets College had faded away even before the death of its founder, Conrad Celtis. But the professorship of poetry and eloquence continued to be filled throughout the first two decades of the century. Between 1506 and 1516, an Italian from Bologna, Angèlo Cospi, received an annual salary of sixty florins to deliver lectures on humanist subjects.[40] He knew Greek and probably gave private lessons on the subject . Cospi's successor in 1516 was Joachim Vadianus, a Swiss who had been one of Celtis's old students. He published editions of several classical authors, among them, Sallust, Sedulius, Ovid and Tacitus.[41] The University records hardly mentioned either man, and apparently

---

Introductio in Ethicen Aristotelis (Vienna: 1501), cited in Michael Denis, Wiens Buchdrucker geschichte (Vienna: Wappler, 1782), 13.

[38] Compendium phillosophie Moralis ex Aristotelis Peripaticorum libris, per Jacobrum Fabrum Stapulensem breviter eleganter contractum. (Vienna: 1513), Denis, op. cit., 87.

[39] Leonardi Aretini in moralem disciplinam introductio familiari Joannis de Stobnicza commentario explanata (Vienna: 1515), Denis, op. cit., 124.

[40] Aschbach, op. cit., II, 278-281.

[41] Conradin Bonorand, Vadians Weg vom Humanismus zur Reformation (St. Gallen: Historischer Verein, 1962).

neither had any serious conflicts with his scholastic colleagues.

Among all the universities of the Empire, the most interesting developments in the relationship of humanism and scholasticism in the early sixteenth century took place at the University of Leipzig. Like Vienna in the previous decade, Leipzig in the early 1500's was the scene of several government-inspired reform attempts. Unlike the Viennese officials, who had tried to dictate their reforms with little assistance from the University teachers, the government of Ducal Saxony worked closely with the Leipzig professorate. Before making final decisions on statute and curriculum changes, it solicited opinions of individual masters from the various faculties. These opinions have all been preserved, and along with the actual statute revisions, they document the pressures and special interests which affected the reception of humanism within a university.[42]

Leipzig was one of the oldest universities in the Empire, and along with Cologne, Erfurt and Vienna, had always been one of the largest. But in 1496 reformers were convinced that the University was in danger of losing its prestigious position. These fears must have been compounded in the early sixteenth century, when competing universities at nearby Wittenberg and Frankfurt were founded. Such developments certainly threatened both a loss of faculty and a decline in student enrollment. Thus in the fall of 1502, at the time when Wittenberg began offering its first lectures, Duke George of Saxony began his second attempt in six years to improve the teaching and discipline of the University of Leipzig.

---

[42] Most of the following is drawn from two source collections: Friedrich Zarncke, *Die urkundlichen Quellen zur Geschichte der Universität Leipzig* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1855); Bruno Stübel, *Urkundenbuch der Universität Leipzig* (Leipzig: Giesecke & Devrient, 1879); Friedrich Zarncke, *Die Statutenbücher der Universität Leipzig* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1861); Herbert Helbig, *Die Reformation der Universität Leipzig im 16. Jahrhundert* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1953) is mainly interested in post-Reformation developments; see also W. Bruchmüller, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Leipzig und Wittenberg* (Leipzig: Dieter, 1898).

As his first step, the Duke asked the faculty members to write down their opinions on what aspects of the University might be improved. About forty-five masters decided to respond, and their answers were delivered to Duke George in late October, 1502.[43] Despite the large number of responses, the proposals showed relatively little variety or imagination. About seven professors blamed Leipzig's troubles on high prices for food and drink, especially beer. Nicolaus Kleynschmidt, for example, argued that more students would enroll if "good tasty beer" (gut wurzisch bir) was sold for five pfennig; and Johannes Sperberg complained that at Erfurt a mug of beer cost a whole penny less than at Leipzig. In a more constructive vein, others scored the lack of diligence among the teachers on the higher faculties, especially the theologians. One theology student claimed his professors delivered only about ten lectures a year and as a result, a student needed the "years of Methuselah" to complete his courses. Another, Andreas Boner, claimed that "theology at Leipzig grows like grass in winter."

---

[43] Printed by Emil Friedensberg, Die Universität Leipzig in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart (Leipzig: Veit & Co., 1898).

Most of the proposals dealt with conditions in the arts faculty, especially the control exercised on the faculty by the older professors who made up the faculty council. As was standard procedure throughout the Empire, the faculty council at Leipzig was not open to every teaching member of the faculty of arts. The new statutes of 1496 had limited the council to sixteen members, four from each of the four nations. Older faculty members had little trouble dominating the council. Changes in council personnel were infrequent, for only death, retirement or graduation to a higher faculty caused a member to lose his position. When vacancies did occur, only professors with seven years of experience at Leipzig were eligible. As a result, young masters were effectively excluded from the body which controlled faculty affairs. The council determined the distribution of lectures, set lecture hours, chose examiners and controlled private teaching in the burses. Not surprisingly the members of the council chose themselves as examiners and reserved popular courses and lecture hours for themselves. The younger members of the faculty rarely taught required courses and were forced to eke out a living by giving private lectures and directing review classes.

The non-council members had been dissatisfied with the situation at Leipzig for some time. But in 1502 they had an opportunity to give full expression to their resentment. Almost one third of the masters who submitted proposals to Duke George were non-council members. Their demands followed a similar pattern. They all wanted the seven-year requirement for council membership shortened. Some demanded that an eight, ten or twelve year limit be placed on council membership, whether a member had received a higher degree or not. Others demanded regular salaries for teachers of exercises and review classes and complained about the cliqueishness and corruptibility of the council members.

What part did humanism play in this general conflict? Several of the young masters complained that council members prevented them from giving courses which attracted enough students to give them a good income. There is little doubt that these "popular" courses were on poetry and rhetoric. One young teacher wrote that it was very difficult to attract students for lessons and review classes on subjects such as the Physics, Topics, and Sophisms.[44] Another complained "that young masters were hindered by the council members so they could not teach what the students willingly heard."[45] A third defended the young teachers against the charge that they neglected the required scholastic courses and gave lessons only on humanist poetry and rhetoric. In response, he claimed that some courses were given on philosophy and logic, but more was being done with literary studies simply because they were more popular with young students. He stated "a person must give *resumptiones* for those things which a teacher has listeners; most listeners are young boys, to whom poetry is more useful than the books of *Physics*, *Ethics* or *Metaphysics*.[46]

---

[44] Ibid., 146.

Thus although few of the teachers demanded specific curriculum reforms, humanist-scholastic compatability at Leipzig was definitely an issue in 1502. If the statute changes favored the young masters, it would mean teachers would have greater freedom to give extraordinary lectures and private classes on humanist subjects. If the older members retained power, they would continue to restrict humanist teaching and limit instruction as much as possible to the traditional scholastic curriculum.

---

[45] ". . .dat de jungen Magistri von den faculisten vorhindert werden, dat se nicht moten resumieren, wat de supposita gerne horen. . . ." *ibid*., 102.

[46] "item sy beschuldigen dy junge, das sy alleyn ynn poesi lessen unnd resumiren; man würt erfynden, das dy jungen meher lessen yn artibus den yn poesi. man muss och resumiren noch dem man auditores hot, dy weye aber das meyste teyl synnt knaben, den denne poesis furderlicher is den libri phizicorum ethicorum ader metaphyzice." *ibid*., 147, 148.

When Duke George published his reforms in 1502, the non-council members had won a clear victory.[47] Article five expanded membership in the faculty council from sixteen to twenty-four men; it decreased the years of service demanded for council eligibility from seven to two years; and it limited council membership to fifteen years, although it stipulated that this measure did not apply to present members.[48] The reforms not only expanded the council, but also removed some of its powers. A special five-man committee, made up of three council members and two non-members, was given the power to choose lecturers for the various subjects. Since this committee was to be chosen by all faculty members, chances were good that young professors would control it. On another issue, the young masters also prevailed. Article four gave faculty members complete freedom to deliver extraordinary lectures and review classes on whatever subjects they wished; it even set aside special times for these extraordinary lectures.

The reforms of 1502 seem to have placated no one. The old masters were naturally indignant that the government had sided with the young members of the faculty. But the young masters found that control of the council did not immediately fall into their hands. The provision that exempted present council members from the new limit guaranteed that control would remain with the older professors for some years to come.

---

[47] Zarncke, Statutenbücher, 28-38; Stübel, op. cit., 262-272.

[48] Stübel, op. cit., 264.

The tension between the two groups surfaced again in 1511 when the Saxon government again attempted to reform the University statutes. As a first step, the government asked the deacons of the four faculties to draw up reports on how well the reforms of 1502 had been carried out. The response of the arts faculty deacon shows that the old conservative faction still dominated the council. The report complained that the 1502 statutes had caused nothing but discord and difficulty.[49] Since young teachers now controlled the distribution of lectures, it alleged that men with no real learning were directing courses on difficult subjects. Furthermore, they chose examiners who were only one or two years older than the students themselves. The council considered the provision about extraordinary lectures to have been especially damaging. Because professors now had relative freedom to lecture when they wished, "the foreign poets as well as masters not enrolled in or obedient to the faculty of arts have like an epidemic privately and publicly taught all hours of the day, whenever it pleased them."[50] The report continued that the members of the council had tried to control these extraordinary lectures, but that they had always been frustrated by "the poets and their disciples."[51] As a result, many teachers had begun to teach poetry, because the extraordinary lectures were drawing students from the required courses in logic, phiosophy and physics. The deacon further stated that only the old masters were making efforts to preserve philosophy at Leipzig; they encouraged professors to teach the required subjects "with good words and a few threats."[52] The deacon concluded his report by reminding the government "that Leipzigers had for a long time received praise from other universities because they were good philosophers." He pointed out that three new universities had been founded with the help of

---

[49] ". . .alleyne das nich itziger gelegenheit etzliche artikel in dye lenge unhaltig, denn sie weyte eynfuhrung machen, gezcengke und zweytracht erwecken und zu unordung behelff geben." Stübel, op. cit., 309.

[50] "Die vierde artickel der stunden halben under welchen

---

dye magistri mogen extraordinarie lessen, hat grosse zwitracht erweckgt der masse, dass dye frembden poeten nicht magistri als dye der facultet artium nicht ingeleybt adder underworffig, unseuclich alle stunden des tages und welche ynen geliebt offentlich und heymlich resumirt haben." *ibid*., 310.

[51] "Diss scheint dye jungen und auch mittels alters magistri dye auch selbst in rath facultatis seint gewest und noch, haben sichs beclagt und gebeten solchs den poeten nicht zy gestatten. Man hat sich beflissen in rath der facultet solchs abczuschaffen, aber allerwege merglich widderstandt befunden vonn poeten und yren anhengern, ist also darbey geblieben." *ibid*., 311.

[52] "Aber dye facultet und sunderlich dye eldisten haben solchs wegtter behertzt fest zu halden ubir e.f.g. reformation, und domit studium philosophie nicht gantz (so dye schuler von den ordenlichen lection und studen durch solch vornemen gezcogen) undergenge, haben also vil magistros mit guten worten, etzlich mit drauen davon abstustehen vormocht. Aber etzliche widdersetzige sint uff yrem mutwillen blieben. . . ."*ibid*.

Leipzig philosophers—Ingolstadt by Johann Permetter, Wittenberg by Martin Polich and Frankfurt by Konrad Wimpina. He recalled that until recently students had devoted themselves to philosophy and as a result, all the faculties had prospered. But now, the poets and their allies among the jurists had the upperhand, and the University was attracting only small numbers of students.[53]

Although the other faculty reports contained fewer grievances than the one submitted by the arts faculty, they showed enough dissatisfaction to convince Duke George that further changes were necessary. Consequently, he again decided to ask for proposals from the faculty members. This time, however, the four faculties rather than individual professors were to make the reports. The response of the arts faculty council, still dominated by older professors, was predictable. It complained about "the great disrespect and disobedience in our university which has begun among the young masters."[54] It recommended that the seven-year requirement for council membership be reinstated, and that the fifteen year limit of service be waved. It also called for more controls on the unrestricted extraordinary lectures.

---

[53] "Es haben also die Leyptziischen lange das lob bey audern universitäten gehabt, das si gute philozophi werenn. Darauss gekommen das Ingelstadt durch doctor Adorff, Wittenberg durch Millerstadt, Franckfurt durch Wympina als gelerte philozophos uffgericht seyn und erwachsen. Es hat auch studium philozophie biss doher universitet erhelden, wenn alleweg dye meisten schuller in denselbigen gewest seyn. Darumb solch fundament zurutten und weyter eynzureunen, andern faculteten wird zu grossen ungedeyden reychen. Und so jura und poetica solten dye oberhandt haben, wurd eyne Mentzische universitet gebern, do es sich dernassen heldt. Es seint aber allenthalf offtmals aldo kaum hundert supposita." _ibid_., 318.

[54] "das grosser unngehorsam, inobedienz in unnser universithet unnder denn jungenn magistris erstannden ist," _ibid_.,277.

Cognizant of the factions within the arts faculty, the Duke also requested a report from masters not in the faculty council. Not surprisingly this group recommended that no changes be made in admitting members to the faculty council. In addition, their report made some specific proposals on the improvement of Leipzig teaching in both philosophy and theology. For the arts faculty they recommended that hew humanist translations of Aristotle be utilized. They argued that the students were turning away from philosophy because they found the "inelegant Latin" of the old translations "unpleasant and wasteful to listen to."[55] They also attacked the stubborness with which the theologians adhered to the old scholastic commentators. The complained that in spite of the large number of theologians, the writings of Aquinas and Capreolus were the only authorities lectured on. As a result, lectures on Augustine and other doctors and the books on the prophets were completely ignored."[56]

---

[55] "Es gedeyt auch g.f. und herr e.f.g. loblichenn universitet zu grossem nachteyl, das studium philosophie jezt zu czeit von den studentibus so sehr voracht und undergedruckt wirdt, kumft unsers bedunckens darauss, dad sie alt translacion Aristotelis bisher gelesen den schulern umb yres ungeschmuckten latein gantz unlustig und zu horn vordrislich. . . ." ibid., 282.

Perhaps in response to the report of the non-council members, the arts faculty council drew up a lengthier set of proposals in the early fall of 1511. Along with many other complaints, the report contained several direct attacks on the humanist innovators at Leipzig. One passage pointed out that the arts faculty had originally modeled itself on the procedures of Paris and Prague. But recently, continued the report, "a few men who have spent some time in Italy and who do not know the custom of our university," have begun to call for reforms and have scorned both the practices of the university and its members.[57] The report went on to attack the amount of time being spent on poetry and rhetoric. It stated that in previous years, lectures had been regularly delivered at Leipzig by men who were "undoubtedly considered learned in all of Germany and Italy." But "in recent years," it continued,

---

[56] "Die magistri und ander so in der heyligen schrift geneygt zu studieren, clagen auch g.h. das yn, dyeweil doch vil doctores vorhanden mith collegiaturn vorsehn, nichts denn Capreolus und lectio Thome von yn gilesen werde, unnd so lectiones in Augustino ader andern doctoribus und buchern der propheten nochdem sich yr facultet woe eygent gancz underlassen." *ibid*.

[57] ". . .disse lobliche universitet ist gestifftet unde fundirt in weise wie die universiteten zcue Praga unde Pariss. Dieweil aber etzliche die eyne zceitlang in Italia gestanden unde disser universitet gewonheit nicht wissen, sie zcue reformiren vorgegeben unde derhalben vorhalden sein worden, unde sie irer vorhaldung uffentlich selber berumeth haben, ist stets disser universitet unde derhalben der gleyder derselbingen vorachtung gevolget, . . ." *ibid*.

"poetical teaching has gotten the upperhand and the arts have become very much depressed." According to the memorandum, humanist courses were popular because the writings of poets and orators were easy to learn and because they prepared students for "worldly work and professions."[58] Consequently, young masters avoided "the good and difficult subjects," and concentrated on poetry, from which resulted "inobedience, bad behavior and divisiveness." Continuing its attack on humanism, the report argued that poetry and rhetoric were not true disciplines, because they dealt with "words and not things:"

> Whoever knows words, he is a grammarian; but he is therefore neither a learned man nor a philosopher, on which the university was founded; for to know words is something proper to young boys. [59]

The solution, in their opinion, was to follow the example of Cologne and Paris and take steps to "moderate and decrease" the lectures on poetry.[60] Concluding with a possible reference to the progress of humanism at Wittenberg and Frankfurt, the report stated that people had been paying too much attention to the "new universities."

---

[58] "Es haben aber yn kurtzer zceit die poetischen resumpciones uberhandt genommen, das die artes sere undergedruckt wurden, dan die poeten unde oratores scint night swer zcu lernen auss welchen die iugenth weltliche wergk unde handel underweisset wirt, derhalben sie geneiget die zcu horen unde die iungen magistri die zcu resumiren scint. . . ." _ibid_.

[59] Aber wie e.f.g. genediglich betrachten mag, sciencie sunt de rebus unde nicht de vocabulis. Wer vocabula wess, der ist ein grammaticus, er ist derhalben aber nicht gelarth ader ein philosoph, doruff die universitet gefundirt, dan vocabula zcu wissen gehoret knaben zcue." _ibid_.

[60] Derhalben mussen sulche resumpciones wie zcu Kollen unde Pariss gemesset unde geringert werden." _ibid_.

Unfortunately the report of the theology faculty has been lost, and the report of the law faculty was brief and inconsequential. But from later evidence, there are signs that these two faculties at this time were competing for control of the pedagogium, the University's school for young students. The report of the faculty of medicine shows that the faculty was sympathetic to certain aspects of the humanist program. In its criticisms of the arts faculty, it attacked the weak training in grammar which students received. It pointed out that many students came to the University with poor grammar training and that the instruction they received only compounded their difficulties. It blamed "Alexander and other unuseful grammar and logic texts, which are scorned by all learned men," It called for the use of "suitable and more famous books" already introduced in other countries and universities.[61]

Finally, the Duke asked for opinions from the other corporate bodies within the University, the four nations. Only the reports of the Saxon and Polish nation have been preserved. Older professors controlled the nations, and accordingly, both reports took a conservative position. The Saxon proposals made no mention of poetry or rhetoric, and merely complained that the faculty of arts was not well-governed "because unskilled masters have been accepted into the council, while the learned have been completely excluded." They recommended a return to pre-1502 practices.[62] The report of the Polish nation was the most conservative of any that were submitted. It opposed the introduction of new translations of Aristotle, claiming that the demands of a few masters should not upset the old practices which had brought great fame to the University. They recommended that new translations be used only to "clarify and interpret" the old texts.[63] Another passage demanded that "the members of the council act diligently that everywhere the study of philosophy and good arts might increase and that lascivious poetry decline, from which young boys are damaged rather than edified."[64] Finally the Poles recommended that the best way to treat "the complainers and trouble-makers" was simply to "isolate them and drive them away." Otherwise their "sparks would surely burst into flame."[65]

---

[61] ". . .in Alexandro und andern unucaen und bey gelarten leutten spottischen grammaticis und logicis und nichtt in den tuchtigen und namhafftigen gelesen wirtt, welchs zy grosser e.f.g. universiteten und landen erschallet. . . ." ibid., 339-341.

---

[62] *Ibid.*, 378-379.

[63] "Dornoch unssirs bedencken dass der alden translation die in diesser universitet weyt ruchtig est und famirt, wiewoletliche magistri villeicht auss basser meynung die nawe translation begerin zu lessen, dass uff keynen weg zu raten ist, wir woldenn denn gar vil nidersteygen, denn wir in kortz sunderlich fieber, pest uffgestigen seyn. Man mag abir wol die alde translation church die nawe cleren und interpretiren." *ibid.*, 285.

[64] "Das auch hiebey die faculisten vleis teten, das allenthalben studium philosophie auch bonarum arcium zunehme unnd poeticam lascivam abnehme, dovon die jungen knaben mehe geletzt wenn edificirt werden. . . ." *ibid*.

Although feelings were intense and the range of issues broad, the Duke and his advisers did their best to reconcile the various factions. The final reforms were in fact a studied attempt at compromise.[66] Consequently, the proponents of humanism made a few gains, but also lost out on several points. Nothing was specified about using new books for grammar, old requirements in the arts faculty were retained and there were no alterations in the teaching of theology. The new statutes left it open to the individual master whether he wanted to use the old or new translation of Aristotle. They gave control of the *pedagogium* to the jurists and stipulated that this was the place where lectures on poetry were to take place.[67] In other words, poetical lectures (only on "virtuous and sound poets") were officially recognized, but were relegated to the *pedagogium*, and not included in the regular arts faculty courses. The composition and powers of the arts faculty council were altered in such a way that neither the young nor old professors could claim victory. The power to choose lecturers returned to the council, but council membership was thrown open to any Master of Arts who had taught at Leipzig for six years and was of good moral character; no mention was made of terminating council membership after fifteen years of service.

---

[65] "Gnediger herre, sol diess regiment in got unnd wol angfaugen werdenn, bedenckt nacio von noten sey, das die capetener und herfurer nest vorsthinnes irthums von diesser stellen abegesundert werden, *ne scintilla ignis iterum reviviscat*. . ." *ibid*.

[66] *Ibid*., 318-326.

[67] "Inn dasselbste pedagogium wollen wir vororden eynen der in juristenschul umb des seigers eilff adder vier nach mittag in arte poetica und oratoria lesen solt unnd inn denselben collegio habitation haben und dartzu in derselben zu resumieren haben und diejinige die vorsolte lectiones in arte poetica haben, die sollen ire lection, resumption unnd exercitien in pedagogio thun unnd was dieselben lasen ader resumirn wollen, das sollen sie suvor dem ordinario ansagen, der kein unzuchtigs ader sundigs zu lesen, davon die schuler geergert und zu bössen sitten gereitzt, sal vorstatten;"*ibid*., 321.

After the promulgation of the reform decrees, the Duke asked the four faculties to give their opinions of them. Stübel has printed the replies of the faculty of arts, law and theology, but they contain little that demands close examination.[68] The theologians mildly objected to allowing poetry in the pedagogium, but the arts faculty expressed satisfaction with the provision about the translation of Aristotle. The government's attempts at compromise had been successful.

Although the proponents of humanism had not attained all their goals, the events at Leipzig show the growing strength of humanism within the academic corporation. The complaints of the arts faculty council clearly show that humanist courses were attracting large numbers of students. And the reports of non-council members show that many young faculty members sympathized with the humanist program. On the other hand the general acceptance of humanist ideas by students and young professors caused a negative reaction among the older professors who controlled the arts faculty council, the faculty of theology and the four nations. Their firm opposition to change prevented the further assimilation of humanist texts and methods in the reforms of 1511. This antihumanist reaction was not limited to the debates over curriculum reform. In the same year, 1511, it also expressed itself in the punishment and expulsion of Leipzig's salaried humanist lecturer, Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus.

---

[68] Stübel, Documents Nos. 257, 258, 259.

Complaints about unnamed "enemied and detractors" were fairly common in the correstpondence of humanists who taught at the German universities. But university records contain few blatant attacks on humanists, especially those who received appointment through government patrons. In 1498 Heidelberg refused to grant a salary for the lecturer on Greek which the Palatine Count recommended.[69] And the intransigence of the Viennese arts faculty in the 1490's frustrated Giralamo Balbi to such an extent that he relinquished his position.[70] But the case of Aesticampianus at Leipzig is the only documented case of a university formally expelling one of its humanist teachers.[71]

---

[69] Chapter III, 151.

[70] Chapter III, 163-165.

[71] Gustav Bauch, "Die Vertreibung des Johannes Rhagius

The thought and career of Aesticampianus explains in part why certain elements at Leipzig found him especially difficult to accept. He was one of those German humanists after 1500 still interested in grammar and rhetoric, but who also felt qualified to teach subjects closely related to philosophy and theology. After studying at the University of Cracow and in Italy, he taught at Mainz and Frankfurt. While at Frankfurt he produced his first published works, the grammar of Marcianus Capella, a portion of Donatus and a separate commnetary on both these works. He also published the Tabula Cebetis, written by Cebes of Thebes, a disciple of Socrates, a work which developed certain Platonic ideas and expounded a theory of education. In 1508 he moved to Leipzig, where he claimed to have been exceedingly busy, occasionally lecturing four times a day, while devoting the rest of his time to preparation, private lessons and "verse-making."[72] As a result, he hardly had time for "eating, sleeping, drinking, or

---

Aesticampianus aus Leipzig," Archiv für Litteraturgeschichte, XIII (1885), 1-33; W. Friedensburg, "Die Berufung des Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus an die Universität Wittenberg," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, XXI (1924), 146-148; Karl and Wilhelm Kraft, Briefe und Documente aus der Zeit der Reformation im 16. Jahrhundert (Elberfeld: Samuel Lucas, 1875) has printed some of his correspondence.

[72] This is how he described his activity in his farewell oration, printed by H. Pescheck, "Erinnerung an zwei einst sehr berühmte Niederlausistzer," Neues Lausitzisches Magazin 20, N.F. 7 (1842), 187-199. German translation by Otto Clemen, "Aesticampianus Leipziger Abschiedsrede," Neue Jahrbücher für Pädagogik, II (1899), 236-240.

making friends." Among the writings he lectured on were several works by Cicero, poetry by Vergil and Horace, the *Decades* of Livy, the letters of Pliny, the rhetoric of Martianus Capella, and the comedies of Plautus. He also lectured on a collection of letters by St. Jerome which he had published himself.

Aesticampianus had been a critic of scholasticism from the beginning of his writing career. But the denunciations he included in the works published at Leipzig were especially harsh. In the introduction to his edition of Martianus Capella's rhetoric, he criticized the Germans for neglecting the serious study of eloquence.[73] He claimed that even "barbarian" people—he included the Bohemians, Poles, Hungarians and Britains—were far ahead of the Germans in the cultivation of good Latin. He mocked the awkwardness of German jurists and diplomats, but reserved his strongest criticisms for the theologians. They were wrong for believing that religious writing had no need for eloquence. Previous theologians, wrote Aesticampianus, had not had polished styles simply because there were few books or teachers to offer instruction on oratory.

---

[73] *Martiani Capellae Suentissimi et clarissimi Authoris Rhetorica cuius forma: ars et usus, non multum In Germania est vel cognitus, vel receptus* (Leipzig: Martin Herbipolesis, 1511). Martianus Capella never wrote an independent work on rhetoric; the text used by Aesticampianus was taken from Book V (*De Rhetorica*) of Capella's *De nupitiis Philologiae et Mercurii*.

But in his opinion, recent writers had only their stubborn selves to blame.

Bebel had made similar criticisms of scholastic theology and had stayed on at Tübingen without serious friction. But Aesticampianus not only urged theologians to study classical literature, but he also chose religious writers to lecture on in his courses. As previously mentioned, he published and taught the letters of Jerome while at Leipzig,[74] and shortly after his departure, he published and lectured on the De doctrina christiana of Augustine at Paris.[75] The introductions to both works contained strong attacks on scholastic theology. In the book published at Paris he compared at length the "steady and delightful" writings of the old and eloquent doctors with the "rough and uncouth" offerings of the "childlike little masters of recent times." For our purposes the thoughts contained in the work published at Leipzig are probably more relevant. In his introduction to Jerome, he defended his right as a rhetorician to treat religious writers by saying that he hoped to show the compatibility of classical and Christian literature. He argued that the highest intellectual achievement was the combination of literary skill and religious insight. But, he continued, many people in his day shrunk back from studying religious writings because all they knew were the modern theologians. Most Christians rejected these authors, for although they discussed controversial questions in a "subtle and penetrating" way, they gave no useful prescriptions for living a pious and virtuous life. The humanist argued that men would be more enthusiastic about religious writing if they were exposed to authors like Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose and Gregory. These men, wrote Aesticampianus, did not offer "a mere foliage of words" filled with sophistries and subtility, but rather the "fruits of meaning" presented in truthful simplicity.

---

[74] Septem divi Hieronymi epistolae ad vitam mortalium instituendam accomodatissime, cum Johannis Aesticampiani Rhetoris ac poete Laureati et Epistola et Sapphico carmine (Leipzig: Melchior Lother, 1508).

[75] Introduction published in part by Gustav Bauch, "Biographische Beiträge zur Schulgeschichte des XVI. Jahrhundert," Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für deutsche Erziehungs-und-Schulgeschichte, V (1895), 8, 9.

Clearly Aesticampianus was a persistant critic of scholasticism, especially the scholastic theologians. While at Leipzig he attacked them in his books and in his lectures; he accused them of scorning classical literature, neglecting the Church fathers and ignoring the three scholarly languages. He was also an active teacher who lectured not only on rhetoric and poetry, but also on religion and moral philosophy. Such characteristics explain why some Leipzig scholastics considered him dangerous and undesirable. Furthermore, the passionate debates on humanism caused by the two reform attempts probably made his position at Leipzig even more tenuous. Although there is no firm evidence that Aesticampianus played an active role in the debates of 1511, a few sentences in the various memoranda may have referred to him. The reports of the arts faculty deacon, for example, complained about those reformers "who had spent some time in Italy, but who were not familiar with the custom of our school." And the proposals of the Polish nation had recommended expulsion "for the complainers and trouble-makers."

Unfortunately, information on the events which led to the humanist's dismissal is sparse. Since none of Aesticampianus's letters from this period have been preserved, four other documents are the only sources of evidence: the terse entries in the University records,[76] Aesticampianus's final oration, a letter included in the Letters of the Obscure Men,[77] and an anonymous short piece entitled Passio Aesticampiani.[78] The latter contains little useful information, however. It is a fanciful and satirical retelling of the affair in which the author has aped the style of the crucifixion story as told in the Bible (in the judgement scene the members of the arts faculty gather around and shout, "crucify him, crucify him!") The selection from the Letters of the Obscure Men (a letter of "Magister Johann Hipp" to Ortwin Gratius) was also designed for satire and is therefore a dubious historical source. But the author, probably a student of Aesticampianus, Ulrich von Hutten, was obviously well acquainted with the affair, and his account fits well with what we know from other sources.

---

[76] Friedrich Zarncke, Die urkundlichen Quellen, 692.

[77] Ulrich von Hutten, et. al., On the Eve of the Reformation "Letters of Obscure Men" tr. Francis G. Stokes (New York: Harper, 1964), 36, 37.

[78] Carl G. Brandis, ed., "Passio Esticampiani secundem Joannem," Zeitschrift des Vereins für Thüringische Geschichte und Altertumskunde, N.F. Beiheft 8 (1917), 1-11.

The single act which sealed the fate of Aesticampianus at Leipzig was the bitter attack he made on the Leipzig professorate in a public oration during September, 1511. What finally drove him to make the speech is not certain. Magister Hipp's letter relates that the humanist often attacked the "sophists" in his lectures, and as a result, he had numerous enemies who slandered his learning and interfered with his lectures.[79] In the speech itself Aesticampianus mentioned similar harassment. The identity of these detractors is not clear. In his letter to Ortwin Gratius, the fictitious Magister Hipp mentioned only one person, Andrew Delitzsh, a member of the arts faculty who had said "Aesticampianus at the University was like a fifth wheel to a coach—for he thwarted the other Faculties, so that the students could not graduate therein." Significantly Delitzsch was no teacher of Peter of Spain or metaphysics, but rather the very poet who later succeeded

---

[79] von Hutten, op. cit., 36, 37.

Aesticampianus as lecturer on the humanities. The implication is clear: for this particular "poet" personal ambition was more important than devotion to a common cause or educational ideal. D. Fidler, the late seventeenth-century writer who published Aesticampianus's speech in 1703,[80] listed four others, two theologians, and two arts faculty members; but he did not mention his source, and no present day evidence supports his assertions.

The speech itself was an impassioned attack on the whole University of Leipzig.[81] In the opening lines, Aesticampianus warned his listeners not to expect "soft and pleasant words, for the tormenting which increases daily, has destroyed all my good humor." He expressed confidence that this would please his listeners, for surely they were all lovers of truth." He went on to describe the goals and subject matter of his teaching at Leipzig. He hoped his students had become "both learned and virtuous," "prizes to their parents and ornaments to the Christian religion." He asserted, "in an unprecedented short period of time, I have commented on those authors who had a double usefulness: they were the wisest and most moral which Greece and Rome had ever had."

After mentioning the specific authors he had lectured on,

---

[80] D. Fidler, Disputatio de Joanne Rhagio Aesticampiano (Leipzig: 1703).

[81] I have used the German translation by Clemens mentioned above.

Aesticampianus reached what he called the most difficult part of his speech—the part where he "gave thanks" to various people at Leipzig. He praised God for giving him health, thanked Duke George for paying his salary and thanked the townspeople for housing and feeding him. Then he sarcasticaly thanked his enemies:

> . . .those who have pursued me with hate and jealousy, who have envied my position, who have never dined or even talked with me, who have closed off the lecture halls, who have kept their students away from my lectures and who have otherwise criticized their value.

He declined to mention his enemies by name, for he claimed their identities were common knowledge to his audience. But he did say that these enemies existed in every faculty. The physicians received him coldly, and the theologians hated poetry the way the "Pharisees had hated sin." Even the jurist, he claimed, had scorned eloquence and had not let him use their lecture hall. He admitted he had supporters among some students and teachers in the arts faculty, and he thanked them for their friendship. But he added that most of the faculty had greeted him with total indifference. He thanked all these opponents, because through "jealousy and derogation," they had driven him to deliver this "manly speech."[5]

He concluded his speech by offering his final farewell to the University. He claimed he was leaving,

> . . .not because of intellectual impotence or scandalous behavior (accusations which hypocrites are

> accustomed to bring against the poets) but because of the disfavor and evil of a few men, who seek to draw students from the path of eloquence and the standard of proper behavior through their foolish speech and exuberance.

He added that Leipzig had remained true to its tradition. He recalled "you hunted Conrad Celtis like an enemy, you tormented Hermann Buschius and expelled him and also you have made war on Aesticampianus with all kinds of intrigue." He warned in closing that Leipzig would never again find a humanist to teach in its lecture halls.

Although Aesticampianus was clearly intending to leave Leipzig at the time of the speech, his difficulties with the University did not immediately cease. The speech had enraged several members of the University, who hoped to force a retraction from the humanist, or, if unsuccessful, to punish him in some way before his departure. The faculties of theology and medicine took the first steps; shortly after the speech, they demanded that the humanist appear before them and apologize.[82] When he refused, the faculties took their case to the University council. Finally a meeting of the council was called for October 2, at which time Aesticampianus was to appear with a copy of his oration. But at the meeting the humanist refused to withdraw anything he had said. Consequently it was left up to the leaders of the four nations to decide a punishment. Finally, on the recommendation of the Polish nation, the council decided to expell Aesticampianus for ten years and stipulate that if he again said anything against Leipzig, the ban would be extended to life. It also accepted the proposal of the Bavarian nation that the Universities where Aesticampianus taught in the future should be informed of the circumstances of his expulsion. Duke George appealed to the council on behalf of Aesticampianus; the selection from the Letters of the Obscure Men adds that "certain jurists and courtiers pleaded for the fellow." But neither appeal had any success. The humanist left Leipzig, travelled to Italy and even took his case to Pope Julius II, As a result, the Pope appointed a Wittenberg jurist to look into the matter, and theoretically the affair continued for several more years. But the University of Leipzig never reversed its decision.

---

[82] For the following, Zarncke, Die urkundlichen Quellen, 692; Bauch, "Die Vertreibung. . . ," 21-32.

The expulsion of Aesticampianus from Leipzig was an isolated incident in the history of humanism and scholasticism, and for this reason, it is significant. It appears to have resulted when a particular kind of humanist taught at a University in a particularly difficult time. Aesticampianus's excursions into religion and moral philosophy made him more objectionable to the scholastics than the humanists who restricted themselves to grammar and rhetoric. Furthermore he was at Leipzig at a time when powerful groups within the University were seeking to stifle further humanist reform. In part he was a victim of this general reaction to humanism. More moderate humanists teaching at universities in calmer circumstances might have had minor conflicts with the arts faculty or university council, but none were ever threatened with expulsion.

German humanism was by now a mature intellectual movement with numerous advocates and a well-defined set of goals; even so it had still not caused any great change in German university practices. Most masters continued to use the old translations of Aristotle, and the lack of competent teachers kept the study of Greek to a minimum. Instruction on classical literature was available at all German universities either through private teachers or salaried humanist lecturers. But only a few schools required these courses, and when they were, regular members of the arts faculty rather than professional humanists were the instructors. A number of institutions officially adopted new humanist texts for grammar instruction, but most of them still retained the medieval manuals.

Although temporarily frustrated, the humanists in this period could at last look forward to the imminent adoption of their ideas by the German universities. The main barrier to reform was the older conservative members of the faculty who clung to the scholastic practices they had always known. But the humanists had won over a significant number of students and young professors. These younger men were still "scholastics," but not in the old sense of the term. For them there was no doubt that along with logic and philosophy, rhetoric, grammar, poetry and even the study of Greek had their place in the university curriculum.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REUCHLIN AFFAIR

Nothing has had more impact on modern interpretations of German humanism than the passion and prolixity of Johannes Reuchlin's contention with the Cologne theologians. Since the nineteenth century, historians have viewed the affair as the classic confrontation between humanism and scholasticism. For most writers here was the final undeniable proof that humanism and scholasticism were irreconcilable opposites, their proponents implacable enemies. It is true that no other controversy matched the Reuchlin affair in duration, magnitude and bitterness. It is true that the affair produced the greatest anti-scholastic masterpiece of the Renaissance, the Letters of the Obscure Men. But it is also true that the wit and rhetoric of works like the Letters have misled many historians, resulting in a distortion of the nature and extent of the controversy.

The external events of the Reuchlin affair are well known, and require only a brief summary.[1] Its origins trace back to 1506 or 1507 when a German Jew, Johannes Pfefferkorn, was bap baptized as a Christian. The convert became a fanatical anti-Semite who devoted the rest of his life to the conversion of other Jews by any means possible. In 1507 he began to write a series of slanderous pamphlets against the Jews which recommended the confiscation of their books and forceable conversion.[2] In 1509 he successfully petitioned Emperor Maximillian for a mandate which empowered him to go through the Empire and confiscate Jewish books. He reasoned that once the Jews could no longer read books on their religion, they would be more likely to accept Christianity. He began his crusade by collecting books in several German cities and towns —Frankfurt, Mainz, Bingen, Lorch, Lahnstein and Deutz. But in 1510, the Archbishop of Mainz, who felt Pfefferkorn was infringing on his power, temporarily ordered an end to his activities. After a number of meetings with the Emperor, it was decided that several universities and private individuals should be consulted before further confiscations took place. Thus in the summer of 1510 the Archbishop sought opinions from the theological faculties of four schools—Cologne, Mainz, Erfurt and Heidelberg. He also solicited opinions from Jacob von Hochstraten, a Dominican theologian from Cologne and the

---

[1] Accounts of the events are contained in Geiger, Reuchlin, 203-454; Brod, op. cit., 178-270. A useful bibliography is contained in Hutten, Operum Supplementum, 2 vols., ed. Edward Böcking (Leipzig: Teubner, 1864, 1869), hereafter cited as Böcking, Supplement.

---

[2] Der Juden Spiegel (1507); Ich heyss eyn buchlün der juden beicht (1508); Furtrag wie die blinden juden ihr Ostern halten (1509); Der Juden veindt (1509). Böcking, Supplement, II, 55-69 lists the full titles and the various reprints and translations.

Inquisitor of Heretical Pravity in Germany; Victor Karben, another converted Jew who was now a priest, and finally Johannes Reuchlin, the great Hebrew scholar.

Every opinion except two supported Pfefferkorn's campaign. The Heidelberg theologians hedged on the issue and called for further consultation; only Reuchlin, who by now had spent almost thirty years in his Hebrew studies, came out firmly against further confiscations. After examining the opinions, an imperial commision recommended the confiscation and examination of all Jewish books except the Bible; but the Emperor still had reservations. He refused to approve the commission's recommendation and claimed he wanted to submit the question to a Reichstag. Frustrated in his campaign of confiscation, Pfefferkorn now published another anti-Semitic pamphlet, Handspiegel, which alleged that Reuchlin's opinion had damaged the Church and gave comfort to its enemies, the Jews. It also personally attacked Reuchlin, claiming that the Jews had bribed him and that a Jewish impostor had written his scholarly books. In response, Reuchlin published a book of his own, Augenspiegel, which contained a copy of his original opinion and a refutation of fifty-two arguments offered by Pfefferkorn.

At this point the theologians of Cologne became more deeply involved in the controversy. Pfefferkorn sent the Augenspiegel to the Cologne theology faculty for examination, and after Reuchlin refused to retract what he had written, one of the theologians, Arnold von Tungern, published a pamphlet which contained a list of forty four errors he had found in the book.[3] At the same time the Cologne theologians successfully appealed to the Emperor for a suppression of the *Augenspiegel*. Reuchlin countered with still another work, *Defensio contra culumniatores suos colonienses*.[4] Here he defended his position on the Jewish books and harshly berated Pfefferkorn and his allies in Cologne.

Now the controversy rapidly escalated. Upon the urging of the theologians, the Emperor suppressed Reuchlin's *Defensio*. The theologians also sent copies of the *Augenspiegel* to the theology faculties of Louvain, Mainz and Erfurt. Concurring with Cologne, all three faculties condemned the work. In the fall of 1513, Hochstraten called Reuchlin to appear before his court of inquisition in Mainz; but before any decision was reached, the Archbishop of Mainz halted the trial on the grounds that Hochstraten was both judge and prosecutor. Reuchlin meanwhile had appealed to Pope Leo X, who in turn passed the matter on to the Bishop of Speyer. In March 1514 the Bishop came to a decision entirely favorable to Reuchlin. He cleared the Augenspiegel of heresy, disrespect for the Church and favoritism to the Jews. He ordered Hochstraten to stop his harassment of Reuchlin and demanded that he pay all costs for the trials at Mainz and Speyer.

---

[3] *Articuli sive propositiones de judaico favore nimis suspecte ex libello theutonico domini Joannis Reuchlin legum doctoris (cui speculi ocularis titulus inscriptus est extracte*. *cum annotationibus et improbationibus venerabilis ac zelosi viri magistri nostri Arnoldi de Tungeri . . .* , (Cologne: 1512).

[4] (Tübingen: Anshelm, 1513).

Now it was Hochstraten's turn to take his case to the Pope. He traveled to Rome to further his campaign against the Augenspiegel, while in the north, the University of Paris officially condemned the book in August 1514. Even powerful rulers became involved in the affair: King Charles of Spain and Francis I both wrote to the Pope recommending the supression of the Augenspiegel; Frederick the Wise of Saxony, Duke Ulrich of Württemberg, Ludwig of Bavaria and Maximillian himself all wrote the Pope on behalf of Reuchlin.[5] With powerful men on both sides of the issue and with much of northern Europe up in arms, the Pope chose to temporize. In the summer of 1516, the papal court was on the verge of clearing Reuchlin, but in July Leo suspended the proceedings. The literary feud persisted, and the Cologne faction continued to work for a Papal condemnation. Finally in 1520 Rome came to a final decision against the Augenspiegel. Reuchlin, now an old man worn out by the long conflict, accepted the decision without further opposition.

---

[5] Maximillian had previously ordered the suppression of both the Augenspiegel and the Defensio; now perhaps on advice of several pro-Reuchlinist councillors, he criticized Hochstraten for needlessly prolonging the controversy after the Bishop of Speyer had already made his decision.

There has been little historical disagreement about the significance of the Reuchlin affair. Most writers have considered the attack on Reuchlin as nothing but a veiled attack on humanism in general. The Cologne theologians were but the leaders of an extensive scholastic campaign to discredit not just Reuchlin, but the whole humanist enterprise. Geiger, for example, in his biography of Reuchlin, interpreted the controversy as a battle for "free expression" on the part of the humanists. Another nineteenth-century historian, Carl Krause, wrote,

> It was soon recognized that it was really barbarism, intolerance and fanaticism which was struggling for victory with learning and a freer way of thinking, that with the intended attack on Reuchlin, every branch of knowledge not buttressed on Church authority—and that in principle was humanism—was threatened.[6]

In our own century Paul Joachimsen argued that the question of the Jewish books was a side issue and that the controversy was in fact a pure struggle of humanism against the "scholastic monks' faction."[7] And in his newly revised biography of Hutten, Hajo Holborn stated, "what embittered the theologians and evoked the condemnation of the universities of Germany" was not Reuchlin's opinion on the Jewish books, but his use of philology "for a new interpretation of Biblical passages." In Holborn's opinion,

---

[6] "Man erkannte bald, dass es eigentlich die Barbarei, die Intoleranz und der Fanatismus waren, welche mit der Wissenschaft und freieren Denkungsart un den Sieg rangen, dass mit dem beabsichtigten Schlage gegen Reuchlin jede Wissenschaft, die sich nicht an die kirchliche Auctorität anlehne—und das war ihrem Prinzipe nach die humanistische—bedroht sei." Carl Krause, Helius Eobanus Hessus, sein Leben und seine Werke (Gotha: Perthes, 1879), I, 167, 168.

> The humanists were endangered. Basically the question was not simply as to the retention of the Jewish books, but as to something much more fundamental. Should the humanists have a voice in the Church? [8]

It would be foolish to argue that tension between humanism and scholasticism played no part in making the Reuchlin affair the bitter and prolonged controversy that it was. But it would be equally wrong to assert that the relationship of humanism and scholasticism was the only or overriding issue in the feud. For some participants in the controversy it was but one of several issues; for others it was not an issue at all.

The fact is that the Reuchlin affair had its roots in anti-Semitism rather than anti-humanism. Hatred and persecution of the Jews were commonplace features of medieval culture. Large scale executions reached a high point during the period of the Black Death when the Jews were accused of poisoning wells or causing the plague by magic or other means. The anti-Jewish mania seems to have died down around 1400 and then gradually increased again in the second half of the fifteenth century.[9] Within the Empire, heightened anti-Jewish prejudice led to increased persecution and the expulsion of the Jews from a large number of German cities and principalities.[10] This same prejudice explains Pfefferkorn's campaign of confiscation and the early support which he received.

---

[7] Paul Joachimsen, "Der Humanismus und die Entwicklung des deutschen Geistes," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, VIII (1930), 460, 461.

[8] Hajo Holborn, *Ulrich von Hutten and the German Reformation* (New York: Harper, 1965), 56.

In the opening years of the controversy, only one person, Reuchlin himself, was at all aware that an issue of scholarship might possibly be involved in the affair. For Pfefferkorn and his early supporters—Hochstraten, Karben and the University of Cologne, Mainz and Erfurt—the campaign was undoubtedly considered an act of Christian piety. The early pamphlets of Pfefferkorn and the opinions submitted to the Emperor by the other parties show no hint of opposing Hebrew for Biblical studies or of any kind of anti-humanist sentiment.[11] Reuchlin, however, saw Pfefferkorn's campaign of confiscation and possible destruction of Hebrew literature as a threat to a lifetime of scholarship. In the opinion sent to the Emperor he recommended that the Jews be allowed to retain all their books except those which contained blatant slanders against Christ, the Virgin or the saints(he claimed he knew only two books of this sort).[12] To support his opinion he drew heavily on his knowledge of civil and canon law, arguing that as subjects of the Empire, the Jews had rights against property seizure. But Reuchlin also argued that any destruction of Hebrew books would harm Christian scholarship. A knowledge of Hebrew literature and philosophy was a valuable aid for interpreting the Old Testament, and Cabalistic studies offered solutions to many mysteries of the universe. Furthermore, Christians would make converts by studying and refuting Hebrew books rather than by destroying them. Reuchlin repeated and expanded these arguments in his Augenspiegel, printed in 1511. It is clear in this work that in the early years of the controversy Reuchlin considered anti-Jewish fanaticism, not scholasticism, as the main threat. He directed his arguments not against Hochstraten or the three universities which had favored confiscation, but against Pfefferkorn, the individual who had started the anti-Jewish campaign. In fact Reuchlin was shocked and surprised when he learned in October 1511 that the Cologne faculty of theology had decided to examine the Augenspiegel for errors. And for a time he was also openly frightened at the prospect. It was one thing to trade insults with the uncultured Pfefferkorn; it was quite another to contend with the powerful Dominicans at Cologne.

---

[9] See Salo Wittmayer Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews, XI (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967). Wilhelm Grau, Antisemitismus im späten Mittelalter (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1939).

[10] Baron, op. cit., 275-277, gives the following dates for various expulsions: Saxony (1432), Spires (1435), Mainz (1438), Bavaria (1450), Würzburg (1454), Brünn and Olmütz (1457), Schweidnitz (1457), Erfurt (1458), Neisse (1468), Würzburg (1498, for the second time), Mecklenburg (1492), Pomerania (1492), Styria (1496), Carinthia (1496), Carniola (1496), Salzburg (1498), Württemberg (1498), Nuremberg (1498), Ulm (1499), Nördlingen (1500), Regensburg (1519), Rothenburg (1520), Brandenburg(1510); in many of the Rhineland towns Jewish communities had been completely wiped out during the Black Death hysteria.

---

[11] Pfefferkorn printed the opinions of Mainz, Cologne and Hochstraten in his *Defensio . . . contra Famosas obscurorum virorum Epistolas* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1864), 27-43. He claimed that the opinions of Karben and Erfurt agreed with the others and were not printed *propter prolixitatem*.

[12] The original copy of Reuchlin's opinion is no longer extant; but Reuchlin published it in an extended and modified form in his *Augenspiegel*, B-E iic; a facsimile has been printed in *Quellen zur Geschichte des Humanismus und der Reformation*, V, ed. Bernhard Wendt (Munich: Froben, 1964); also printed with modern German translation in Johannes Reuchlin, *Gutachten über das Judische Schriftum*, ed. Antonie Leinz-v. Dessauer (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 1965); for a discussion of Reuchlin's general attitudes toward the Jews, see Guido Kisch, *Zasius und Reuchlin* (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 1961).

For several months he did his best to avoid a conflict with the Cologne scholastics. Just two days after receiving the information that the theologians intended to inspect his book, he sent off two flattering, almost obsequious letters to members of the Cologne faculty. To Arnold von Tungern, the deacon of the faculty, he wrote that he was rejoicing because "so learned, so skilled" a man was to direct the examination of the Augenspiegel; he added he was looking forward to seeing his criticisms. He expressed his great love for scholastic theology and assured Tungern that he had no grudge for any university, especially "the most splendid University of Cologne." He conceded he was a lawyer and no theologian and that "whatever therefore the Holy Church, which is the column and foundation of truth, believes, and however it believes, I will also believe the same."[13] He did confirm, however, that "there was no law, no canon, no public decree, no rule of the universal Church" which said that the Jewish books should be burned. In his letter to Conrad Collin, another Cologne scholastic, he was just as humble and flattering.[14]

Reuchlin's letters did not bring the desired results. In a letter from the Cologne theologians dated January 2, 1512, Reuchlin was accused of twisting the meaning of the scriptures, interfering with the campaign against the "perfidious Jews" and setting forth proposition "scandalous, ill-sounding and offensive to pious ears."[15] In addition the theologians sent along a list of forty-four errors which they had gleaned from the Augenspiegel. Reuchlin responded with another meek letter which assured the theologians of his love of the Church and his desire to serve holy theology. But he refused to admit any errors, claiming he did not know exactly what the theologians wanted him to do.[16] Then in mid-February, 1512, the faculty sent him its specific demands. To show once and for all that he was no friend of the Jews, he was to destroy all unsold copies of the Augenspiegel, recall those in private hands and make some kind of public confession of error.[17] By now Reuchlin's patience had run out. He demanded an end to the theologians' interference, refused to recall the Augenspiegel, saying what happened to it now was up to the booksellers. In a separate letter to Collin, he assumed a more belligerent tone. He said he would have preferred to remain at peace with the Cologne faculty, but if they wanted to continue the controversy, he would not shrink back. His friends, he threatened, great orators and poets, "who venerate me as their teacher," would retell the conflict for posterity, to the great glory of Reuchlin, to the great disgrace of the University of Cologne.[18]

---

[13] "Fateor enim: in scholis theologiam non didici, sed civiles leges, quare vestram disputandi rationem ignoro. . . Quicquid igitur sancta ecclesia quae est columna et firmamentum veritatis credit, et qualitercumque credit idem ego et taliter credo." Reuchlin, Briefwechsel, 139.

[14] Ibid., 140-144. [15] Ibid., 146-150.

After Reuchlin's refusal to acquiesce, chances for compromise became increasingly remote. They all but disappeared when Arnold von Tungern and Pfefferkorn both published books against the Augenspiegel in 1512. Pfefferkorn's Brandspiegel included the usual anti-Semitic, anti-Reuchlin slanders but contained no general attack on humanism. This also held true for Tungern's Articuli, which mainly consisted of the forty-four errors the Cologne theologians had found in the Augenspiegel. None of these errors had anything to do with Reuchlin's assertion that Hebrew literature was a valuable aid for Christian Biblical and philosophical studies. Many of the alleged errors dealt with Reuchlin's legal opinion that the Jews held property rights as subjects of the Empire. Also questioned was Reuchlin's argument that the Jews were not heretics, since by definition, a heretic was one who had once been a member of the Church. Reuchlin was also accused of misinterpreting the nature of the Thalmud, twisting the meaning of various Biblical passages, and erroneously stating that the Jews did not deserve eternal damnation because of their ignorance of Christ. That Tungern was motivated by anti-Semitism rather than anti-humanism becomes even more apparent in the second section of his work. He completely neglected Reuchlin and the Augenspiegel and compiled a long list of slanders against the Jews, which for the sake of convenience, he arranged in alphabetical order. Clearly, Tungern attacked Reuchlin not because he was a humanist, but because Tungern considered him a patron and protector of the Jews.

---

[16] Ibid., 151-159.

[17] Ibid., 160-164.

[18] "Accederent item post manum validam poetae et historici, quorum hoc tempore magna copia vivit, qui me praeceptorem quondam suum, ut par est, venerantur, qui tantam iniquitatem adversariorum perpetuae traderent memoriae et innocenter passum me describerent cum aetherna gymnasii vestri ignominia." ibid., 167.

This can also be said for the condemnations of the Augenspiegel by the Universities of Mainz, Louvain, Erfurt, Cologne and Paris between 1512 and 1514. There is nothing in the substance or wording of the decrees which suggests that the book was condemned because its author recommended Hebrew for Bible study and was one of the leading European humanists. The judgement of Louvain stated, "we are unanimously of the opinion that that book has been sprinkled here and there with various errors and assertions somewhat suspect to the faith and especially contains agreements with the perfidious stubborness of the Jews."[19] The Mainz theologians wrote in their judgement, "we have found opinions offensive to pious ears and producing scandal among the young, disgorging irreverence for the sacred doctors, nourishing approval for the perfidious Jews and otherwise suspect of heresy."[20] The Cologne theologians condemned the Augenspiegel because it argued that the "Thalmud and certain other books of the Jews should not be burned" and because it was "favorable to Jewish falsehood."[21] The Paris condemnation of 1514 called the book "false, temerious, scandalous, erroneous, offensive to pious ears, contumelious and blasphemous to the Church." Why? Because it defended the Thalmud and was manifestly favorable to the Jews.[22] In not one of these opinions was there any slighting reference to Reuchlin's association with the humanist movement. In fact the comdemnation by the University of Erfurt went out of its way to praise Reuchlin for his piety and humanist learning. It called him,

---

[19] " . . unicorditer censuimus, libellum ipsum variis erroribus et assertionibus in fide non parum suspectis passim esse respersum et imprimis pertinaci Iudeorum perfidie consentanea continere." Pfefferkorn, Defensio, 112.

[20] " . . .in eodem dicto libello sententias deprehendimus piarum aurium offensivas aut parvulorum scandalum illativas, sacrorum doctorum irreverentiam evomativas, judiare perfidie favores nutrivas, vel etiam de heresi suspectas." ibid., 121.

> a most learned man of singular and preeminent erudition, capable of three languages—Hebrew, Greek and Latin—widely famed by the integrity of his life and morals, a good and Catholic Christian, submitting himself and his case to the Roman Church, practiced in the free discourse of the orators and philosophers. 23

Nevertheless Erfurt condemned the book: although it was "beyond the intention of the author," the book scandalized simple

---

[21] ". . . in quo de Thalmud et quibusdam aliis Judeorum libris non cremandis agebatur, eundemque tanc multipliciter suspectum habuissemus et Judaice perfidie inordinate faventem ..... ." ibid., 114.

[22] Ibid., 126-129.

[23] ". . . invenimusque auctorem ipsius alioquin singularis ac preeminentis eruditionis virum doctissimum, triplicis linguae, hebraice, grecanice, atque latine, peritissimum celebri fama de vite ac morum integritate nobis multipliciter commendatum, et prout commendabilis sua testatur protestatio, quam consultationi sue et premisit et subjexuit, bonum ac catholicum christianum, se suaque Romane ecclesie determinationi humillime subiicientem, forensium philosophorumque more liberis verbis usum, . . ." ibid., 118.

Christians and "gave comfort to the perfidious Jews in their blindness." Nor did the condemnation of the Augenspiegel by Hochstraten differ from those of the universities; he asserted "it contained many errors more favorable to the perfidious Jews than is fitting, it was injurious to the Church, irreverent to the holy doctors and highly scandalous to the simple members of the faith."[24]

The anti-Reuchlin pronouncements by "non-scholastic" parties, namely Emperor Maximillian, Francis I and Charles of Spain, also show that Reuchlin's favoritism to the Jewish books rather than his association with humanism was the main issue for his opponents. All three of these rulers, had humanists among their councillors and were willing patrons of the humanist movement. They, like the scholastics, condemned the Augenspiegel because of its alleged favoritism to the Jews. When in 1512 Emperor Maximillian banned the sale of the Augenspiegel, he did so "because it not only strengthened the Jews in their obstinate blindness, but also perverted many simple Christians."[25] Charles urged the Pope to condemn

---

[24] Ibid., 123-126.

[25] "Nobis compertum est Joannem Reuchlin legum doctorem, aliquos libellos composuisse, impressissime ac publice vendidisse, atque emisisse, in quibus inter reliquos valde multos articulos expressit, qui judaicorum librorum negocio utiles et nostre christiane fidei in contumeliam asse possent, propter quos Judei non solum in sua obstinata cecitate roborarentur, sed etiam multi Christiani simplices perverterentar." ibid., 100.

Reuchlin's book because "it quite clearly contained knowledge to help and favor the Jews."[26] The letter of Francis I to the Pope cited the condemnations by Cologne and the other universities and alleged that the Augenspiegel helped the Jews in their stubborness and contained "heresies against our holy Catholic faith."[27]

The behavior of Reuchlin's fellow-humanists before 1514 also supports the contention that humanism was not really involved in the early years of the controversy. With a few exceptions, the humanists ignored the squabble over the confiscation of Jewish books. Mutian mentioned the proceedings in several letters, and Pirckheimer and several Viennese humanists wrote Reuchlin after the appearance of the Augenspiegel. A few of these men had no idea why Reuchlin had become involved in the affair in the first place. Writing in 1512, Joachim Vadianus, a Viennese humanist, wished Reuchlin well, but added that he hardly felt it was necessary to spend so much energy refuting a mere "baptized Jew."[28] Similar sentiments were exchanged by Willibald Pirckheimer in early 1513. He told Reuchlin that he had made a mistake to have answered the arguments of the "semi-Jew," Pfefferkorn. Because he had done so, Pfefferkorn now had a measure of fame he never could have attained on his own merits.[29]

---

[26] "Pependit jam diu etiam nunc pendet apud Sanctitatem Vestram fidei catholice causa super libello quodam impio, qui tametsi titulo ipso perfidie Judeorum impugnationem pollicetur, tamen eandem multis suis partibus non obscure adjuvare et fovare comperitur." ibid., 146.

[27] Ibid., 144, 145.

[28] Reuchlin, Briefwechsel, 168.

Two humanists, Ortwin Gratius and Herman Buschius, even gave public support to Reuchlin's enemies. Despite the lambasting which Gratius received from the authors of the Letters of the Obscure Men, he was skilled as a writer of Latin prose and poetry and was an enthusiastic supporter of humanist educational ideas. He had learned classical letters at the famous school of the Brethren of the Common Life at Deventer, and later taught grammar, poetry and rhetoric at the University of Cologne.[30] In a speech delivered at Cologne in 1507, Gratius, with his praise for poetry and rhetoric and his attacks on the detractors of classical literature, sounded like a typical humanist. In his book against Locher in 1510, Wimpheling lauded Gratius as one of Germany's promising poets.

But Gratius shared Pfefferkorn's anti-Jewish sentiments and was his ally from the start. It was probably Gratius who translated Pfefferkorn's early anti-Semitic pamphlets into Latin. And later Gratius composed a poem which was printed along with von Tungern's Articuli. He attacked Reuchlin by name, claiming that because of the *Augenspiegel* a great crime had been perpetrated, the forces of Hell triumphed, the Virgin wept and Jesus suffered his wounds anew.[31] Then in early 1514 Gratius edited a book of his own against Reuchlin.[32] He included several documents (the condemnations of the *Augenspiegel* by the universities and Tungern's forty four "errors"), recounted the history of Reuchlin's trial at Mainz, and added a preface and conclusion of his own. Gratius, like the Erfurt theologians, praised Reuchlin's humanist learning and his linguistic accomplishments. But he harshly attacked Reuchlin for studying and defending Hebrew literature; repeating the arguments advanced by the universities, he asserted that Reuchlin's opinions confused Christians and strengthened the Jews.

---

[29] Ibid., 167.

[30] Dietrich Reichling, Ortwin Gratius, seine Leben und Wirken(Heligenstadt: Dilion, 1884).

Hermann Buschius was another humanist who lent support to the Cologne theologians in the early stages of the controversy. Buschius, who taught poetry and rhetoric at Cologne during the 1510's, was later to become an outspoken advocate of Reuchlin. But in 1512 he composed a poem which was printed with Tungern's *Articuli*. Entitled "Elogy to the Jews and the perverted Jew lovers," the brief poem described the faith's triumph over the Jews and their ill-willed benefactor.[33] As late as January, 1514, he was still in doubt about the advisability of supporting Reuchlin. At that time he wrote to Johannes Murmellius that he wished Reuchlin had stayed out of the conflict.[34] Only in 1514, after a personal meeting with Reuchlin, did he finally come over to the side of the great Hebrew scholar. But his early support of Tungern must be interpreted as further evidence that humanism was not an important factor in the early stages of the conflict.

---

[31] Reprinted in Böcking, *Supplement*, II, 78, 79.

[32] Ortwin Gratius, *Hoc in opusculo contra speculum oculare Joannis Reuchlin Phorcensis hec in fidei et ecclesie tuitionem continentur, etc. . . .* (Cologne (?): 1514).

Thus for the first three or four years of the controversy the relative worth of humanism and scholasticism was not an issue in the Reuchlin affair. Reuchlin refrained from attacking the learning of his adversaries, and his opponents did the same. This began to change in 1513, and was due in part to actions taken by Reuchlin himself. Early in that year, in response to Tungern's Articuli, he published his Defense of Johannes Reuchlin against his false Accusers of Cologne.[35] Following a now well-established pattern for books of this kind, Reuchlin combined a repetitious defense of his ideas with personal attacks on the learning and motives of his opponents. In the case of Tungern, Hochstraten and the other Cologne theologians, this meant an attack on scholastic theology, the first such attack the aging humanist had made. It was nevertheless, a limited and moderate attack. Only in one section, where he attacked the dialectical concerns of the Cologne theologians, did Reuchlin come close to censuring scholastic theology in general. Taking his arguments from St. Jerome, he stated that "the dialecticians, including Aristotle, who is their prince, are accustomed to spread their nets of argumentations and compress the diffuse freedom of rhetoric into the thornbushes of syllogism."[36] Reuchlin did insist that the study of dialectic had a place in everyone's education. It was one of several methods of discourse, and was useful in teaching young boys to differentiate truth from falsehood. But Reuchlin went on to argue that it was lamentable for grown men to expend all their energies on such matters. After a person had studied the liberal arts, philosophy and theology, it was laughable "to sink back to elementary things, to play as boys with their babblings and show themselves learned in foolish and inquisitive sophisms."[37]

---

[33] "Hermanni Buschii Pasiphili in Judaeos Judaeorumque amatores praeposteros Elogium." Printed by Geiger, Reuchlin, 361.

[34] Karl and Wilhelm Krafft, Briefe und Documente aus der Zeit der Reformation im 16. Jahrhundert (Elberfeld: Lucas, 1876), 129.

[35] Defensio Johannes Reuchlin contra calumniatores suos Colonienses (Tübingen: Anshelm, 1513).

---

[36] "Dialectici ait & Aristoteles qui princeps est solent argumentationum retia tendere, & vagam rhetoricae libertatem in syllogismorum spineta concludere, Hi ergo qui in eo totos dies & noctes terunt, ut vel interrogent vel respondeant, vel dent propositionem, vel accipiant, assumant, confirment atque concludant, quos quidem contentiosos vocant, qui ut libet non ratione sed stomacho putent litigandum." ibid., Ciib.

But except for this brief attack on the scholastics' dialectical concerns, Reuchlin carefully restricted his criticisms to the Cologne theologians. Speaking of theologians elsewhere he wrote:

> knowledge of true theologians is a divine light descended from the Father above—something which the outstanding doctors and masters of theology of other universities have; through their heavenly wisdom the world is enlightened, through their piety brotherly love is enhanced and cherished; nature has fashioned them to honesty, seriousness, temperance, justice, learning and humanity, by whose learned authority and example of good living human society is strengthened and peace in the body and members of Christ is kept indivisible. [38]

Reuchlin's main argument was that the Cologners did not deserve the name "theologian." "I refuse," he wrote, "to call my false accusers of Cologne theologians; they are false theologians, rejected counterfeits." He referred to his adversaries as "theologists" so that "none of the true theologians of other universities will bear a grudge against me."[39]

---

[37] Sed hoc turpe duco, post artes & philosophiam viro ad sublimem illam theologiae facultatem evecto, relabi ad elementa, & cum pueris balbutiendo ludere, ac se ingeniosum invanis & curiosis sophismatibus ostentare." ibid., C iib.

[38] ". . . sed verorum theologorum scientia est divina desursum a patre luminum descendens quam habent aliqrum universitatum praeclarissimi doctores & magistri theologiae, quorum caelesti sapientia mundus illustratur, quorum pietate fraterna caritas incenditur & incensa fovetur, quos natura ad honestatem finxit, gravitatem, temperantiam, justiciam & bennevivendi exemplo societas humana confirmatur, & pax in christi corpore atque membris indissoluta custoditur. ibid., C iii.

He went on to argue that the Cologne scholastics had usurped the name theologian either through "robbery or trickery,"

> . . . puffed up with human learning, they do not blush to deceive both in life and talk, offer work only in contentions and quarrelsome disputes, for which they are all armed with a language of trickery, and have turned their back on good actions. 40

In other words, there was a great chasm between theologians and the theologists—a difference between "virtue and vice, between good and bad, between the adulterated and the pure, between false and pure."

What is significant about Reuchlin's attacks was that he made all his comparisons between the theologians of Cologne and the scholastic theologians of the other universities. He did not compare them to the "humanist theologians"—men like Erasmus, Lefèvre and himself. It is also important to point out that such attacks played a relatively small role in the *Defense* as a whole. Reuchlin devoted most of the book to the reiteration of his arguments in favor of preserving the Jewish

---

[39] ". . . quos equidem solos calumniatores meos Colonienses nequeo vere theologos appellare, sed falsos theologos sicut nummos reprobos . . . ego posterius notiore vocabulo theologistas appellabo, ne mihi quisque aliarum universitatum de sancto coetu verorum theologorum succenseat. . . ." *ibid*., C ib.

[40] "Cuius rei tam sanctum nomen vel de rapina vel furto sibi calumniatores mei arrogant, etiam quacunque humana scientia inflati, qui & vita & lingua mentiri non erubescunt, qui solis operam dant contentionibus & rixosis disputationibus, ad quod artificium linguas armant, longe a tergo bonarum actionum relictis officiis." *ibid*., C ii.

books.

As the controversy continued, however, the issue of the Jewish books diminished in importance for Reuchlin. He declined to answer the later books of Hochstraten and Pfefferkorn which recommended confiscation. In two letters he even expressed the theory that the attack on himself was part of a larger "conspiracy" to subvert the entire humanist movement. In 1513 he wrote Jacques Lefèvre that his opponents attacked him simply because he knew Greek and Hebrew. "The pure pride of my barbarian adversaries," he wrote, "could not bear with calm mind that posterity, imbued with more honorable teaching might condemn their puerile studies and anile disciplines."[41] And in November, 1514, after the condemnation of the *Augenspiegel* by the University of Paris he wrote a friend that there was a plan afoot at the University of Louvain to attack Erasmus, and as soon as they suppressed Reuchlin, all the poets would be discredited.[42] Whether Reuchlin sincerely believed these remarks, or whether he simply meant to gain sympathy for himself is not certain. But except for these two letters, he never made a great deal of the "conspiracy theory."

Actually Reuchlin's behavior after 1514 shows his main interest was the defense of his own personal honor rather than that of the whole humanist movement. After all the Cologne theologians had accused him of writing a heretical book, confusing simple Christians, favoring the Jews and much else. Thus in 1514 he put together a collection of letters written to him by leading European churchmen and humanists which praised his learning and piety.[43] This was followed in 1518 by a similar volume containing letters written to him during the period of the conflict with the theologians.[44] But Reuchlin wrote nothing after 1514 mainly designed to discredit scholasticism. Critical references to scholasticism became infrequent and mild, as they had been in Reuchlin's writings before the controversy began. In the preface to De arte cabalistica (1517) he spoke of the "monstrous barking of the sophists."[45] And in the preface to his De accentibus et orthographia (1518), while describing his early university training, he referred to the "puerile nonsense of the schools" and the "supercilious and dull sophists, both amazing and ridiculous."[46] But he did not pursue these attacks at any great length.

---

[41] Reuchlin, *Briefwechsel*, 199.

[42] *Ibid.*, 231.

In the closing years of the controversy, Pfefferkorn continued to be the most active publisher among the anti-Reuchlinists.

---

[43] Clarorum virorum epistolae latinae, graecae & hebraicae . . . missae ad Joannem Reuchlin (Tübingen: Anshelm, 1514).

[44] Illustrium virorum epistolae . . . . (Hagenau: Anshelm, 1519).

[45] Reuchlin, Briefwechsel, 268. [46] Ibid., 283.

As it had been from the start, his sole interest was to justify his campaign against the Jews. In 1514 he published a brief pamphlet entitled *Sturm Glock, about and against the Jews, an Attack on the Murderers of Christ*.[46] The book harshly criticized the Jews and their supporter, Reuchlin. Its main purpose seems to have been to publicize the condemnation of the *Augenspiegel* by the University of Paris, which Pfefferkorn printed in German translation. Then two years later, in 1516, he published a more extensive work, *Defense of Johannes Pfefferkorn against the Notorious and Criminal Letters of the Obscure Men*.[47] Although he repeated his previous attacks on Reuchlin's learning and strongly criticized the blasphemous *Letters of the Obscure Men*, Pfefferkorn's book contained no direct attacks on the humanist movement. He recounted the course of events, defended various actions he had taken and printed a large number of mandates and condemnations against the Jewish books and the *Augenspiegel*. A German version of the *Defensio* appeared in the same year.[48] Then in late 1516 or early 1517 he published still another brief pamphlet, *Streitbüchlein*, whose specific goal was to refute the personal slanders against him contained in the

---

[46] *Sturm Glock . . uber und wider die Juden, anfechter des leichmans Christi* (Cologne: Quentel, 1514).

[47] *Defensio Joannis Pfefferkorn contra famosas et criminales obscurorum virorum epistolas* (Cologne: Quentel, 1516). Modern edition, (Leipzig: Teubner, 1864).

[48] *Beschyrmung Johannes Pfefferkorn* (no place or date).

Letters of the Obscure Men.[49] He again gave a brief narrative of the affair and printed a number of documents and letters of recommendation which praised his character and his campaign against the Jewish books. The last in Pfefferkorn's long series of anti-Semitic pamphlets appeared in 1521, almost a whole year after the final papal condemnation of the *Augenspiegel*.[50] The book celebrated the triumph of righteousness and once more set forth his personal attacks on Reuchlin. Reuchlin, now less than a year away from death, was called "a bulwark of the devil, an oracle of evil, teacher of lies, blasphemer of the holy Church, and advocate and patron of the treacherous Jews," and so on.

It is not surprising that the works of Pfefferkorn, whose anti-Semitism had triggered the controversy, avoided general attacks on humanism and stuck to defending his attacks on the Jews and their books. But what of the Cologne theologians? How did they react to the attacks on scholasticism contained in the *Letters of the Obscure Men* and the rest of the pro-Reuchlin literature? Actually only one Cologne theologian, Hochstraten, took an active part in the war of pamphlets after 1514. He finally entered the literary battle in 1518 after spending several years in Rome unsuccessfully trying to convince the Pope that he should condemn the Augenspiegel and its author. His failure to attain the condemnation and the abuse he had suffered at the hands of certain humanists must have stung a powerful man like Hochstraten. As professor of theology at the prestigious University of Cologne and as one of Germany's leading Dominicans, he was a man who was used to having his own way on questions of religion or Church practices. Thus, having failed to quash the opposition in Rome, he took to the printed page when he returned to Germany and doggedly sought his goal until the papal condemnation of 1520. The three works which he wrote in 1518 and 1519 were in many ways similar to the previous pamphlets written by Pfefferkorn, Tungern and Gratius.[51] He minutely examined the arguments of Reuchlin and his supporters and picked out inconsistencies and logical flaws. He branded Reuchlin as an advocate of the Jews who hardened Jewish stubborness, confused simple Christians and blasphemed the Church. How could Reuchlin argue that Jews had rights as citizens of the Empire? In Hochstraten's opinion, this was like saying that pigs and donkeys were citizens. Had he forgotten that previous Popes had ordered the burning of the Thalmud? Hochstraten continued at great length, citing anti-Jewish statements from many authors and pointing out errors in Reuchlin's writings.[52]

---

[49] *Streydt puechlyn vor dy Warheit und eyner warhafftiger Joannis Pfefferkorn Vechtende . . .* . . (no place or date).

[50] *Ein mitleydliche claeg uber alle claeg an unsern allergnedlichsten Kayser und gantze deutsche Nation*. (1521: no place)

---

[51] Apologia . . . contra dialogum Georgio Benigno Archiepiscopo Nazareno in causa Joannis Reuchlin ascriptum (Cologne: 1518); Apologia secunda contra defensionem quandam in favorem Joannis Reuchlin (Cologne: Quentel, 1518); Destructio Cabale seu Cabalistice perfidie ab Joanne Reuchlin (Cologne: Quentel 1519).

But Hochstraten's works also show a change of tactics on the part of the anti-Reuchlinists. Previous writers had largely neglected the argument that Jewish literature should be preserved because of its value for Christian scholars. This was not so with Hochstraten. He never openly stated that a knowledge of Hebrew was of no value to Bible studies, but he did argue that little could be learned from Jewish Biblical commenatires. He also asserted that Thalmudic and Cabalistic studies were worthless pursuits for Christians. His main argument was that since the Jews were ignorant of Christ, they had only in imperfect conception of God. In addition such studies weakened the faith of Christians and strengthened the Jews in their stubborness. Attacks such as these were definitely aimed at one aspect of the humanist program for the rejuvenation of philosophy and theology. But it was an aspect which interested small numbers of humanists, and Hochstraten's arguments can hardly be construed as attacks on humanism as a whole. Furthermore, Hochstraten's goal remained the same as his predecessors: by denigrating Reuchlin's scholarship and his interest in Hebrew studies, he hoped to undermine the argument that Jewish books should be preserved because of their value for Christians.

---

[52] For a more thorough review of Hochstraten's arguments in his three books, see Geiger, Reuchlin, 199-202, 404-413, 421-426.

There was only one book in the whole controversy directed against humanists in general rather than Reuchlin and his opinion on Hebrew literature. This was the Lamentations of the Obscure Men, a collection of satirical letters which first appeared in March 1518 and was republished in an exapnded edition later in the same year.[53] It was not written by Hochstraten, Tungern or any other scholastic theologian, but rather by Ortwin Gratius, the Cologne humanist who had sided with the theologians in their anti-Jewish campaign. As is well known, Gratius received a rough going over in the Letters of the Obscure Men—he was accused of everything from writing bad poetry to sleeping with Pfefferkorn's wife. The Lamentations was an attempt by Gratius to beat the Reuchlinists at their own game. In this collection, the "humanists"—Hans Leverworst, Petrus Olfontianus, Pultronus Sycophanta, Guilhelmus Capniolambius and many others—are the "obscure men" whose correspondence makes them appear ridiculous.

As the title suggests, many of the letters were simply "lamentations"—expressions of despair and confusion because so many "honorable and learned men" opposed the "obscure Reuchlinists."[54] In one letter after another the correspondents sadly tell of repeated setbacks: Pope Leo X has condemned the Letters of the Obscure Men and the great Erasmus has censured it; Pfefferkorn has written a letter to the Pope "full of sound arguments;" Hochstraten has written an Apology "very damaging to Reuchlin's cause." And in the second edition of letters, the humanists complain about the lambasting they received in the first edition! Other letters told how the Jews prospered and rejoiced because of the efforts of Reuchlin and his followers. In letter forty four, Trullus Pomivendulus related that the Jews were reading Reuchlin's works in their "diabolical synagogues" and hoped to translate them into German; furthermore, they laughed at the Christians and were permitted to "preserve and retain" their blasphemous books.[55]

---

[53] Lamentationes obscurorum virorum (Leipzig: Teubner, 1864).

Gratius also attempted to depict the Reuchlinists as neo-pagans and enemies of the Church. Several admit being in a league with the anti-Christ, while others correspond with Gog and Magog, their two "princes." In return Gog and Magog urge them to keep up their "rashness, arrogance, impudence, blindness, obstinance, foolishness, heresy and blasphemy."[56]

---

[54] Examples of the "lamentation" type of letter are numbers 1, 7, 9, 10, 11, 17, 26, 33, 37, 42 from the first edition; 1, 9, 10, from the second edition.

[55] Ibid., 265.

[56] Ibid., 274.

In one letter, Simprianus concedes that Reuchlinists are "irrational and degenerate Christians," who debase "both good and wise men and Christ and the Virgin."[57] In another, Johannes Peltzflicker tells of a meeting of poets where Christ had been blasphemed and the Cross deflied.[58] Many of the letter-writers boast of their interest in magic and love for the pagan gods.

The Lamentations also portrayed the Reuchlinists as vain, corrupt and morally degenerate. Many letters could be cited as examples of this approach, but one single letter, number sixteen from the second edition, includes most of Gratius's ideas on the point.[59] In this epistle, Doctor Grytz makes a list of thirty one rules which all Reuchlinists were to follow. Among them were:

1) Never observe the sacred canons or rules of the Church.
3) Never show reverence for theologians, monks and those ignorant of poetry.
6) Bring forth calumny for all good things.
7) Never abstain from the pleasures of Baccus or Venus.
8) Dilligently read the Letters of the Obscure Men and the Augenspiegel.
9) Roam the streets at all hours of the day and night.
13) Fully dissipate yourself in gambling and drunkeness.
15) Visit the house of prelates "accidentally" at meal meal time.
16) Adopt the ways of flatterers and show-offs.

---

[57] Ibid., 259.

[58] Ibid., 210.

[59] Ibid., 285-288.

18) Despise holy things and stay away from Church on Sundays and feast days.
22) Deceive the simple and naive folk.
23) Have constant contact with Jews and worthless men.
25) Truculently bear a sword and dagger.
29) Fight to appear more than you are.
31) Visit the taverns and brothels every day.

In a few of the letters Gratius tried to belittle the intellectual interests of the humanists. In one exchange two would-be humanist philologists puzzle over the meaning of several "Arabic" words—"Oxus, perdoxus, reveloxus, rammeldiptsus, and rammeldiblesen." Each one tells how he has unsuccessfully scoured Vergil, Ovid and Aristotle for the meaning of the words. They finally agree they have something to do with the "occult mysteries" of the Greeks.[60] In another letter Schelmo writes to Genselinus Schelmoni, a "very learned grammarian." Schelmo asks for some information on grammar "so he could overshadow the theologians in debate." He wanted to know what kinds of birds were mentioned in Donatus, what they ate and where they flew; also, how many kinds of meter there were in Donatus. Ganselinus responded that Donatus used three birds, sparrow, eagle and hawk, all of which "eat fruit" and "fly in the forest." After conveying this information, he warns Schelmo,

> Beware my dearest Schelmo, that you do not make manifest these occult mysteries of Minerva to the theologians, since such remarkable things

---

[60] *Ibid.*, 226-229.

> are not to be found in the Books of the Sentences or the Secunda Secundae. 61

Another writer proudly boasts that theologians could never best the Reuchlinist in debate, for

> they do not know the poets or the mysteries of our letter writing, nor have they studied the fifteenth book of Aristotle's Physics, the De anima of Porphyry or the metaphysics of Aesop.

Of course the Physics contained only eight books, Porphyry never wrote De anima and Aesop was no metaphysician.[62] In another example, Johannes Grap, a "new poet," writes to Arnulphus Codrianus that he has just read that according to Aristotle the three principles of physics were matter, privation and form. Grap feels this is ridiculous, since he has found such assertions "neither in the epigrams of Martial, the satires of Horace or the work of any other poet." Codrianus responds that whoever prefers the "old philosophers" to the opinions of the poets "knows only smoke and rancid fat." The learning of Martial, Ovid, Propertius and Tibullus all outshine the wisdom of philosophers and theologians. Furthermore, Aristotle had made a "horrendous mistake" in naming the principles of physics. Codrianus argued that they were actually "air, earth, and sea:"

---

[61] Ibid., 238, 239.

[62] Ibid., 264, 265.

> From the air in fact rain falls to the earth, which again and again produces inebriating drinks, lions, wild boars, cows and bulls, and other necessary brute beasts. And the sea grants fish so we do not drop dead in the road during Lent.

He added that Grap should not worry if he could not find these things in Scotus or Albertus Magnus.[63]

The occasional citation of Erasmus and Pico della Mirandola to support his arguments suggests that Gratius did not intend to discredit all humanists, but only sought revenge against the "wretched degenerates" who had authored the Letters of the Obscure Men. The lengthy letter which Gratius published at the end of the Lamentations confirms this suspicion. Here he denied that he wanted to offend Reuchlin himself or all his supporters. There were many good poets in Germany and there were many good men who had sided with Reuchlin. He called Reuchlin a "Catholic man and a distinguished poet." As for Reuchlin's supporters, he wrote,

> Johannes Reuchlin surely has on his side noble, learned, erudite and eloquent men and most devoted to him; some of them have disputed on the field of battle (something we cannot curse). Besides, he has for himself many worthy young men, several studious professors of the arts whom we all honor and venerate. [64]

Compared to the caustic anti-scholastic satire of the Letters of the Obscure Men, the Lamentations seems like little more than a playful, almost affectionate, jab at the humanists.

---

[63] Ibid., 290.

[64] Ibid., 352.

It is clear that the opponents of Reuchlin did not consider the controversy as a show down between humanism and scholasticism. What they sought from the onset was a justification and confirmation of their opinion in favor of confiscating the books of the Jews. If, after 1514, they occasionally attacked the humanists and the Hebrew scholarship of Reuchlin, it was because these were the individuals who had thwarted their original plans. If Reuchlin had been a physician or a philosopher rather than a humanist lawyer, there is no reason to believe that Pfefferkorn and the theologians would have pursued him with any less vigor.

The fact that opposition to Reuchlin was centered entirely at Cologne also supports this interpretation. Several universities condemned the Augenspiegel, but only because of its favoritism to the Jews. Even after the appearance of the Letters of the Obscure Men, no scholastic outside of Cologne wrote anything against Reuchlin and the humanists. No other German university gave financial support to the Cologners to help pay the costs of the various judicial processes. And except at Cologne, where the teaching of certain pagan poets was outlawed in 1516,[65] there is no sign that the passions raised during the Reuchlin affair caused a reaction against the humanists who were teaching at the German universities. On the contrary, it was in the final years of the Reuchlin affair that humanists began to attain the reforms of scholastic education which they had worked for since the 1450's.

---

[65] Keussen, Die alte Universität Köln,

Humanist support for Reuchlin was extensive, but not as universal as most historians have implied. Most of the better known Rhineland humanists remained aloof from the controversy. In 1513 Reuchlin tried to enlist the support of Wimpheling and Brant by writing Wimpheling a long letter describing the course of the conflict.[66] But neither man responded, and their writings during the 1510's make no mention of Reuchlin's difficulties. Nor did Wimpheling's other close friend, Ulrich Zasius, take an interest in the conflict. In 1513 one of Reuchlin's friends at Vienna sent Zasius a copy of Reuchlin's Defensio, but the arguments contained in the book did not inspire him to do anything on Reuchlin's behalf.[67] There were others who remained silent. Among them were two veterans of previous conflicts with the scholastics—Johannes Aesticampianus and Jacob Locher. Nor is there any evidence that Reuchlin's fellow Swabian, Heinrich Bebel, ever expressed his support for Reuchlin's cause.

---

[66] Ibid., 200-207.

[67] Ibid., 209.

Other humanists publicly supported Reuchlin, but had private doubts about his actions in the controversy. This was the attitude of Conrad Mutian, the Erfurt humanist who has often been depicted as one of Reuchlin's most enthusiastic supporters. Considering his personal intellectual interests, one would have expected him to be one of Reuchlin's strong defenders. Like Reuchlin, he was a speculative humanist, interested in the revival of the _prisca theologia_. And he had little respect for scholastic philosophy and theology. But an examination of his correspondence shows that he had an ambivalent attitude toward much that Reuchlin wrote and did in the controversy.

Mutian followed the events in the controversy from the time the Emperor asked Reuchlin, Hochstraten and the four universities for their opinions on the advisability of confiscating the Jewish books. At the time, Mutian observed it was foolish to consult the universities, for the theologians would never catch the "truths of the Thalmud" or the "mysteries of the Cabala in their dialectical nets."[68] He personally opposed suppressing Hebrew literature, agreeing with "a whole crowd of learned men that it was a Christian thing to tolerate the quibblings of denying peoples." Besides, if Jewish literature was condemned, Mutian pointed out "you would have to give up the writings of the prophets, the reading of which is rather frequent in the Churches, no one can deny."[69]

---

[68] "Tentent sua retia sophistae nunquam veritatem Talmudici codicis deprehensuri. Non enim dialecticae laqueis Cabalae abditum capi potest." Mutian, _Briefwechsel_, 194.

In 1512 and 1513 references to the affair were frequent. In the fall of 1512 he noted the condemnation of the Augenspiegel by the Cologne theologians and lamented that Reuchlin was being harried by "men uncultivated in Greek and Latin, not to say Hebrew."[70] When in May, 1513, the Emperor banned further sales of the Defensio, he wrote excitedly,

> Alas! Alas! Truth is with no protector. It has been overcome by barbarism. The unlearned judge the learned. 71

But Mutian hesitated to express his support for Reuchlin. Although he urged his younger friends to write Reuchlin, Mutian had no correspondence with the embattled humanist until summer, 1516. His failure to write was an embarassment to his younger disciples. Heinrich Urban made excuses for him, writing to Reuchlin in October, 1513 that Mutian could not write because he was "busy working in the vineyards."[72] At one point, when the Augenspiegel was submitted to the University of Erfurt for examination, Mutian spoke of taking a more active role in the affair. On September 10, 1513, he wrote to Urban and asked him for the names of the Erfurt rector and deacons. He promised he would "urge, warn, ask and implore" them to do justice for Reuchlin.[73] Whether Mutian carried through on his promise is not certain. If he did, it would have been an empty gesture anyway, for Erfurt had already condemned the Augenspiegel on September 3. When Mutian finally wrote to Reuchlin, his two letters were bland and devoid of enthusiasm. In one he expressed sympathy that one of Reuchlin's friends, Eitelwolf von Stein, had died.[74] In the other he congratulated Reuchlin after the suspension of the Roman trial in 1516, assuring him that he had large numbers of young supporters at Erfurt.[75]

---

[69] "Sed Bessarion et omnis eruditorum coetus censet ex re esse christiana tolerare recutitiae gentis cavillationes; quibus accedo. Nam si aliter facias, relinquere prophetas necesse habes, quorum lectio quam sit in aede sacra frequens, nemo est qui nesciat." ibid.

[70] Ibid., 255.

[71] "Heu, heu! Veritas patrono caret. Barbaria dominatur. Indocti de doctis judicant." ibid., 296.

Why was Mutian so reserved? The answer is that he had some serious doubts about Reuchlin's behavior in the controversy. As early as October, 1512 he asserted that Reuchlin had "erred here and there" in the Augenspiegel.[76] And in

---

[72] Ibid., 386. [73] Ibid., 375. [74] Ibid., 562, 563.

[75] Ibid., 645; Reuchlin, Briefwechsel, 256, 257.

[76] "Hanc questionem doctissimus aetatis nostrae adeo scienter et graviter expedivit Jo. Reuchlin, ut, etiam si interdum erraverit (est enim homo), tamen laude dignus est." ibid., 259.

March, 1514, he objected to the language Reuchlin had used in drawing up a handsheet distributed at Mainz at the time of the heresy trial. Although Reuchlin had been seriously attacked, Mutian noted that Reuchlin had spoken "not without anger and madness" and had sinned for "too bitterly defaming his adversaries." He decided that Reuchlin must now be considered a man skilled in five languages—Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Swabian and "slander-Latin" (malelatina).[77] Mutian expressed his doubts most thoroughly in a letter written at the time of the imperial ban of Reuchlin's Defensio. In Mutian's opinion, Reuchlin had erred by expressing doctrines "offensive and confusing to the unlearned laymen of the Church." Mutian believed that the mysteries of philosophy and theology should be reserved for the learned and not made public to the common people. Reuchlin, he felt, had broken this rule in both the Augenspiegel and the Defensio:

> He should have acted more moderately to spare the ears of the cloistered, not to offend the pious ears of the simple people and the beliefs of the crowd; he should not have placed his own honor before these considerations. To refute the authority of the Church, even if you are making errors, is contumelious and full of impiety when you are a member of the body. 78

---

[77] "Alioqui dicerem, peccare Capnionem nimis acriter proscindentem adversarios; plus enim acrimoniae habet titulus teutonice scriptus majoribus literis in fronte citationis quam totum illud instrumentum. Non sine stomacho et rabie loquitor." ibid., 404.

[78] "Modestius igitur agere debuit, monastarum auribus

In no way, he continued, should a learned man do anything to weaken the beliefs of the multitude. When this happened, the Emperor could not govern, the Pope could not rule; "everything would revert to its former chaos," and "not laws and good customs, but force and caprice would reign."

Widespread humanist interest in Reuchlin's troubles did not emerge until 1513 and 1514. When in those years four universities condemned the Augenspiegel, when Hochstraten summoned Reuchlin before his court of inquisition and Reuchlin published his Defensio, one by one the German humanists expressed their support for Reuchlin. Even if very few of them had any interest in Hebrew literature, they hated to see Reuchlin beset by Dominican monks and scholastic theologians. And undoubtedly some of them nurtured the fear that the goal of Reuchlin's enemies was to discredit all of humanist scholarship, not just to justify confiscation of Jewish books. For most of the humanists participation in the affair was limited to writing letters to Reuchlin, which praised his humanist learning and damned his barbarian opponents. The young disciples of Mutian around Erfurt—Eobanus Hessus, Heinrich Urban, Eurycus Cordus, Crotus Rubeanus, Peter Aperbach—all wrote letters of this

---

parcere, non offendire pias aures simplicium et vulgi opinionem propriis honoribus anteferre. Auctoritatem ecclesiae refellere, cum sis hujus corporis membrum, et contumeliosum est et peenum impietatis, etiamsi errores deprehenderis." ibid., 353.

kind to Reuchlin. Others who followed the same path were Jochim Vadianus, Johannes Cuspianus and Simon Lazius of Vienna, Johannes Caesarius, Hermann Buschius, Heinrich Glareanus, humanist teachers at Cologne, Conrad Peutinger of Augsburg and Phillip Melanchthon. Only a few humanists actually stated their support for Reuchlin in published books. Crotus Rubeanus, Mutian's most radical follower, authored large segments of the Letters of the Obscure Men and was the main inspiration for the work. Pirckheimer attacked Reuchlin's detractors in the prefaces to three translations he published in 1517 and 1518. Count Hermann of Neuenar, a wealthy Cologne patrician and humanist dilettante, edited and helped publish a number of pro-Reuchlin works.[79] Standing far above the others in rage and bitterness was Ulrich von Hutten. He wrote the second part of the Letters of the Obscure Men, published a lengthy poem, The Triumph of Reuchlin, and in 1520 even convinced his fellow noble Franz von Sickingen to declare a feud against the German Dominicans.

With the notable exception of the Letters of the Obscure Men, humanist polemics during the Reuchlin affair were repetitive and unimaginative. Only a very few of the humanists seemed aware of the debate about confiscating Jewish books. Two of his supporters wrote scholarly books which defended Reuchlin's argument in favor of retaining the Jewish books. But they were both Italians, Petrus Galatinus and Georgio Benigno.[80] Mutian had some acquaintance with Reuchlin's Cabalist studies, and Pirckheimer briefly defended Reuchlin's position on the Jewish book in the preface to his translation of Lucian's Fisherman. Here he affirmed that "many recondite doctrines lay hidden in the Thalmud and Cabala."[81] But a more typical humanist response can be seen in the letters of Buschius and Hutten which were published in Epistolae trium illustrium virorum. The book was designed by its editor, Count Neuenar, as an answer to Hochstraten's first Apology, a book which stuck mainly to the issue of confiscation. Hutten's letter was filled with fiery denunciations of Hochstraten's impudence and /slanderous language, but it made no pretense of answering the Dominican's arguemnts. Buschius's letter also denounced Hochstraten in general terms and made great fun of his childish, un-Ciceronian Latin style.[82]

---

[79] These were the work by Benigno, cited below, and Epistolae trium illustrium viorum (Cologne: 1518); the latter included letters from Reuchlin, Hutten and Buschius against Hochstraten's first Apology.

The most common humanist approach to defending Reuchlin was to compare his numerous merits with the abject worthlessness of the Cologners. In Triumphus Capnionis, for example, Hutten described the faults of Reuchlin's opponents: ambition, falsehood, superstition, barbarism, ignorance, hatred; but Reuchlin was brave, innocent, learned, industrious, truthful, immortal.[83] He also included personal attacks on each one of the anti-Reuchlinists; for Hochstraten, he wrote:

---

[80] Peter Galatin, Opus . . . de arcanis catholicae veritatis (Basel: 1516). Georgius Benignus, Defensio praestantissimi viri Joannis Reuchlin . . . (Cologne: 1517).

[81] Willibald Pirckheimer, ed., Luciani Piscator seu Reviviscentes (Tübingen: 1518), B iii.

[82] Geiger, Reuchlin, 413-417.

> Are God and religion spoken of? At once he cries to the Fire, to the fire! Does one write a book? To the fire with the book and its author! Do you speak truth? To the fire! Do you utter falsehood? To the Fire! Do you commit injustice? To the fire! He is all over fire! To the fire! To the fire! Such is his first and last word. [84]

Pirckheimer made similar comparisons in the introduction to his translation of Lucian's Orator. The supporters of Reuchlin were "polished, calm, firm, suitable, acute, erudite and ignorant of no proper branch of learning;" his opponents were "barbarous, inert, rude, inept, stupid, illiterate and unknowledgeable in whole disciplines."[85]

Another characteristic of most of the humanist writing in the controversy was its restricted nature. There was much disparaging talk about theologists, barbarians and sophists, which read out of context seem to be general attacks on all of scholastic theology. But in most cases, such slanders were directed against a specific group of men—Hochstraten, Tungern, Pfefferkorn and the others who had actually attacked Reuchlin. Surprisingly the Reuchlin affair engendered little serious thinking among the humanists about the reform of scholastic theology. Most of the humanist polemics were thoroughly unconstructive. Once again, Pirckheimer was an exception. During his defense of Reuchlin in the preface of Lucian's Fisherman, he outlined his program for the education of the "ideal theologian."

---

[83] Hutten, Opera Omnia, ed. Böcking, III, 428, 443.

[84] Ibid., 431, 432.

[85] Pirckheimer, Opera Omnia, ed., Goldast, 246.

One work—the Letters of the Obscure Men—and one author Ulrich von Hutten—do not fit the generalizations about the humanist response in the Reuchlin affair. No other humanist matched Hutten in indignation and rage; and no other work matched the Letters in sarcasm and bitterness. Born in 1488, Hutten was only in his mid-twenties when the German humanists began to take notice of Reuchlin's dispute with the theologians. His early life had already showed him to be an emotional, headstrong individual, with no serious scholarly ambitions. After fleeing a monastery in 1505, he assumed the career of a wandering scholar, studying at six universities, Cologne, Erfurt, Frankfurt, Greifswald and Rostock, between 1505 and 1510. There were two sources for his humanism and his strong antipathy to scholasticism. The first was his contact with Mutian's circle at Erfurt; the second, more important, source was his study under Johannes Aesticampianus at Leipzig and Frankfurt. Two other factors in Hutten's intellectual make-up also helped make him the most passionate Reuchlinist. First, there was his intense German nationalism, which yearned for a revival of the Empire and the breaking of Rome's grip on the German ecclesiastical system. Second, he was a strong anti-clerical who blamed the ignorant, immoral priests and monks for most of the Church's troubles.

In other words Reuchlin's opponents incarnated everything that Hutten hated—they were scholastic theologians, Dominican monks, allies of the hated Italian Pope. He came to see the Reuchlin affair as a cosmic battle between good and evil in which the honor of Germany was at stake. To Hutten, Reuchlin's detractors symbolized the worst features of an ecclesiastical system which had kept Germany in intellectual and religious darkness. In the preface to his poem Nemo (1518) he reflected on the three hundred years of damage wrought on Christendom by scholastic theology: true theology was abandoned, religion declined, good studies were eclipsed, and worst of all, superstition emerged, which "so beclouded pure worship that one could not know whether many things belonged to Christ, or some new god reserving for himself the last age of the world."[86] And in the preface to his Triumphus

---

[86] Hutten, Opera omnia, I, 182.

capnionis, he proclaimed that the scholastic theologians were more worthy of hatred than the Turks:

> These are the ones by which good studies are destroyed to the detriment of the age, by which letters are trampled on, divine theology reduced to useless loquacity, pure nonsense and superstitious absurdities. 87

Germany, he continued, had labored under their yoke for centuries, partly because of the injustice of the Pope and the cowardliness of the Emperor. But now because they attacked Reuchlin, Hutten could prophesy their imminent demise:

> Germany has opened her eyes; the veil has fallen away; she sees you now at full length! You have conspired against Reuchlin. Germany could no longer remain deluded when she saw you attack such a man. She felt his honor threatened and they rose to a man to defend it. The scholastics had wrapped religion in darkness, but we have poured on light! The Gospel has seen the light of day, Jerome has reappeared, Greek and Latin authors have been published.

He urged all his countrymen to close ranks against the sophists; "our chains are broken, the die is cast. To fall back is impossible."[88]

---

[87] Hi sunt, quibus temporum infoelicitate recta studia interierunt, literae proculcatae sunt, divina theologia ad inutilem loquacitatem, meras nugas, aniles ineptias recidit." *ibid.*, 237.

[88] "Ne facite, oculos habet Germania, vobis detractum velum, in aperto constituti neminem caelabitis . . . sed recte adversus Capnionem insurrexistis hoc tempore! nam ejus viri magnitudine perspectissima ignorare se diutius Germania non potuit, servare suum decus, suam gloriam studuit. Renatus est Hieronymus; novum Testamentum lucem induit; multa ex Hebraeo, multa ex Graecis eruuntur; ardet opus . . . adeste, incumbite, ruptus carcer est, jacta alea, regredi non licet." *Ibid.*, 237, 238.

The greatest monument to Hutten's pent-up fury was his contribution to the famous Letters of the Obscure Men, which first appeared in the fall of 1515, followed by an expanded second edition in the spring of 1517.[89] Actually Crotus Rubeanus, another young follower of Mutian, conceived the idea, but Hutten was his ally from the start. He composed several letters for the **first edition** and wrote almost all those included in the second. The format of the Letters is well known: monks, theologians, the teachers of scholastic logic and philosophy and anti-Reuchlinists of all kinds write letters to Ortwin Gratius which are designed to show their intellectual feebleness and moral frailities. It would be possible to spend many pages citing humorous passages from the Letters, but since the work is easily accessible in English translation, this is hardly necessary. But a few comments are in order.

First the criticisms of scholasticism were far more sweeping and inclusive than those contained in the other pro-Reuchlin writings. Most of the other humanists restricted their slanders to the scholastics of Cologne. But for Hutten and Rubeanus, all of scholastic philosophy and theology were the targets. The medieval grammars and the foolish syllogizing of arts course scholasticism were again held up to ridicule; and scholastic theology was subjected to constant mockery. Second, the Letters contained much material which was clearly irrelevant to the Reuchlin affair or even a book designed to denigrate scholasticism. For example, the book satirized the Roman curia, the Pope, indulgences, relics, religious orders (not just the Dominicans) and Church dietary rules. Clearly, Hutten and Rubeanus wanted more than a victory by Reuchlin; what they wanted was a transformation and reform of the Church in Germany.

---

[89] Hutten, et. al., On the Eve of the Reformation—Letters of Obscure Men, trans. Francis G. Stokes, (New York: Harper, 1964).

There is very little evidence to support Geiger's statement that the humanists greeted the Letters of Obscure Men "with great joy." Men like Erasmus strongly disapproved of the Letters,[90] and although they never mentioned the work in their writings it is probable that men like Wimpheling, Mutian and possibly even Pirckheimer felt the same way. Reuchlin never expressed an opinion about the Letters, but even Geiger concedes that he probably did not approve of them, since they were "far removed from his character."[91] Hutten mentioned the Letters favorably in some of his correspondence, but otherwise there is an almost uncanny silence about the Letters among the other German humanists. Even for Reuchlin's defenders the anti-scholastic, anti-clerical satire of the Letters of the Obscure Men seemed excessively rude.

---

[90] Erasmus to Caesarius, August, 10, 1517. Erasmus, Epistles, II, ed. Francis M. Nichols (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1904), 610-612.

[91] Geiger, Reuchlin, 378.

In conclusion, most historians have erred by depicting the Reuchlin affair as essentially a conflict between humanism and scholasticism. It is true that the Reuchlinists were made up largely of humanists (though by no means all of them); but the anti-Reuchlinists were made up of a disparate group of scholastics, anti-Jewish fanatics and even several kings. Furthermore the relative worth of humanist and scholastic intellectual ideas was never the main issue in the controversy. For both Reuchlin and his opponents, the controversy began as a dispute over confiscating Jewish books and ended as a question of professional and personal pride. There is no evidence to support the contention that the Cologne scholastics wanted to discredit humanism by attacking Reuchlin. Hochstraten accused Reuchlin of heresy not because he "wanted to use philology to change the meaning of the Scriptures" but because he had thwarted the campaign to suppress Hebrew literature. Most humanists came to Reuchlin's support because they admired him as a scholar and a person and because they wanted to defend him from what they considered improper attacks on his character and learning. Only one figure in the whole feud, Ulrich von Hutten, conceived the Reuchlin affair as a great show-down between humanism and scholasticism. Unfortunately, his interpretation seems to have been the opinion that most historians have chosen to accept.

CHAPTER IX

THE END OF MEDIEVAL SCHOLASTICISM IN GERMANY

In the closing years of the 1510's, as the Reuchlin affair dragged on toward the Papal decision of 1520, events more significant for the history of humanism and scholasticism were taking place in the lecture halls of the German universities. Since the days of the first wandering poets in the 1450's, the humanists had called for changes in the goals and methods of German university teaching. But after sixty years of persistant effort, they had yet to make any significant breakthroughs. A number of schools had hired humanists to lecture on poetry and rhetoric, but rarely were these lectures on classical literature mandatory for degrees. A few schools adopted humanist grammars for Latin instruction, but most continued to use the Doctrinale of Alexander Villedieu or some other medieval text. Here and there a teacher utilized a new humanist translation of Aristotle, here and there someone offered a course on Greek or Hebrew. But no university made any special effort to support or encourage these efforts. Beginning around 1517, this situation began to change. One by one the universities in the Empire adopted humanist-inspired curriculum reforms. Gradually, medieval scholasticism passed into history.

The first German school to reform its statutes on the basis of the humanist program was the University of Wittenberg. The origins of the reform go back to spring, 1516, when Elector Frederick the Wise sent several of his councillors to Wittenberg to investigate conditions at the university he had founded. The councillors warned him of an impending decline for the school unless the Elector increased his financial support.[1] Two years went by, and the Elector did nothing. Then in the spring of 1518 he sent several more of his councillors to the Saxon school. This time they reported finding a good deal of sentiment in favor of revising the statutes. The Elector was agreeable, and he appointed his chaplain and main councillor, George Spalatin, to direct the proceedings. Spalatin, in turn, asked his close friend, Martin Luther, to draw up a list of suggestions for change.

The place of humanism in Luther's thought has been widely debated, and this is not the place to review the numerous theories and interpretations.[2] It is clear, however, that Luther was well-acquainted with classical literature and admired the work of men like Erasmus, Reuchlin and Lefèvre. He shared the humanists' belief that Biblical studies rather than scholastic commentaries held the key to religious enlightenment; and he agreed that a sound knowledge of Greek and Hebrew offered the best foundation for these studies. He also shared the humanists' aversion for the rational dialectical approach to theology practiced by the scholastics. In a lengthy letter to Spalatin, dated February 22, 1518, he attacked dialectic as an obstacle to true theology:

---

[1] "Auf das Echb. g. universitet nicht als Gribswaldes, Mentz, Trier, Bassel und ander universiteten die auch allein auf die geistlichkeit fudiert sein, desoliert, wust und zu nicht werde, darumb wolde E. chf. g. sulche berumpte Leuthe stiften, die das dinges warten und den hauf der studenten nachzeuchet; sunst wird E. chf. g. universitet unsers bedunkens kein bleiblichen bestand behalden." Friedensburg, ed., *Urkundenbuch der Universität Wittenberg*, I, 75.

> Maybe it could be play and exercise useful for the minds of youngsters, but in Biblical studies, where only faith and inspiration from above are desired, all syllogism has to be left behind. [3]

Finally, he was convinced that a renewal of Chrsitianity depended on a reform of education. In May, 1518, he wrote his old professor of scholastic philosophy at Erfurt, Jodocus Trutfetter, that "it is impossible to reform the Church unless canon law, scholastic theology, philosophy and logic that we now have are eradicated and new studies instituted."[4]

---

[2] Spitz, "Luther, the Reformer," Religious Renaissance, 237-266 is a sound discussion; see also literature which he cites, 345-352.

[3] Martin Luther, Werke, I (Weimar: Hof-Buchdruckerei, 1930), 170.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, 150.

Luther consulted his fellow theologian Andreas Karlstadt on the reforms, and they sent their proposals to Spalatin on March 11, 1518. In the accompanying letter, Luther predicted great fame for the Elector and the University if the proposals were put into practice. "At the same time," he added, "here is offered an opportunity to reform all the other universities, indeed, to drive away all barbarism and to improve our whole education in the widest range."[5] Unfortunately the list of suggestions has been lost. But a letter of Luther's written to Johannes Lang on March 21, 1518, probably gives an accurate idea of the contents. Luther enthusiastically wrote,

> Our University progresses; we can expect in a short time to receive lectures on two, maybe even three languages, also on Pliny, mathematics, Quintillian and other worthy authors, and reject those worthless lectures on Peter of Spain, Tartaretus and Aristotle. Already the Elector has been won over, and the matter has been set before his Council.[6]

A revised lecture schedule, composed later in the spring, shows the impact of Luther's ideas.[7] Peter of Spain and Alexander Villedieu were excluded; logic was to be taught on the basis of the original Aristotelian texts, and grammar instruction was to rest on Priscian. Although the usual Aristotelian writings continued to be taught, new humanist translations replaced the old versions. Regular stipends for two more lectures on classical authors—Quintillian and Pliny—were established. A pedagogium was also set up where young students learned the rudiments of grammar and studied rhetoric and poetry. Most important, lectureships were established in both Greek and Hebrew.

---

[5] ". . . ac vera occasio omnium universitatum reformandorum, quin et citius universae barbariae eliminandae omnique eruditioni cumulatissime augmentandae." ibid., 153, 154.

[6] Ibid., 155.

[7] Friedensburg, Urkundenbuch, I, 85, 86.

The first professor of Greek was the twenty-one year old Phillip Melanchthon, Germany's greatest educational reformer in the sixteenth century. He was responsible for eradicating the last vestiges of medieval scholasticism from the Wittenberg curriculum. On his arrival in Wittenberg, in August, 1518, he delivered in Luther's words, "an extremely learned and absolutely faultless"[8] oration on improving university studies.[9] Under the impact of his ideas, the University gradually abandoned scholastic commentaries as an aid for teaching Aristotle. In December, 1518, Luther wrote to Johannes Lang that the University was giving up Aquinas's commentaries on logic and on Aristotle's Physics; the latter was superfluous because the professor was using the original text and the former was being replaced by lectures on Ovid's Metamorphoses.[10] Melanchthon helped draw up another lecture schedule in 1521, and by this time his handbooks on rhetoric, dialectic, Greek and Latin had all become required texts.

---

[8] Luther, Werke, I, 192.

[9] Phillip Melanchthon, "De corrigendis adolescentiae studiis," Opera Omnia, XI, 15-25.

There was no formal reform of teaching in the faculty of theology, but under the influence of Luther and Melanchthon, old scholastic methods were also abolished. Melanchthon's Loci communes became the basis for theological discussion. Luther, Melanchthon and the other members of the faculty devoted their lectures to the Bible. The writings of the Church fathers and Luther himself became the primary aids in exegesis.

Luther was correct in his assumption that once Wittenberg reformed its teaching, other universities would follow its example. Many schools would have reformed teaching anyway, but for several schools in northeast Germany Wittenberg's example speeded the process. In 1519, the government of Ducal Saxony initiated a reform of the University of Leipzig.[11] Early in the year government officials asked for suggestions from the various faculties, but unfortunately their proposals have not been preserved. A short time afterwards, a new lecture schedule which incorporated the reforms was announced.[12]

---

[10] Luther, Werke, I, 262.

[11] Helbig, Die Reformation der Universität Leipzig im 16. Jahrhundert, 29-32.

[12] Zarncke, ed., Statutenbücher der Universität Leipzig, 34-43.

The reforms were not as thorough as those at Wittenberg. The preamble to the new schedule confirmed that philosophy was still the basis of the faculty of arts and that Aristotle was the best authority. But it added that when treating Aristotle, teachers were to avoid "foolishness and intricate questions;" furthermore, since "it was most wretched for the mind to learn things from commentaries," they were to pay closer attention to the text.[13] Priscian replaced Alexander for grammar instruction, but Peter of Spain was retained for the teaching of elementary logic. The statutes stipulated, however, that to prevent discouragement on the part of beginners, "complex questions of first and second intention and those wanderings of Scotus's formalities" were to be avoided.[14] The study of classical poetry and rhetoric had a prominent place in the new lecture schedule. At eleven o'clock lectures were given on Cicero, at one, on Quintillian and at four, on Vergil.

---

[13] "Non illius interpretum somnia aut intricatas questiones interpretabimur, cum miserrimi sit ingenii, ut Seneca ait, ex commentariis tantum sapere, in quibus neglecto Aristotelis sensu de lana, at aiunt, eaprima cintendunt sophistae. Sed illius opera, partim ab Archeropylo partim ab Augustino Nipho et Hermelao Barbaro, Theodoro Gaza translata, enucleabuntur ordine subscripto." ibid., 39.

[14] "Ne dialectices tyrones perplexis secudariarum et primariarum intentionem quaestionibus, aut plane illis Scoti formalitatum meandris et Crysippi soritarum modis aut dialectica ingeniorum cote et artium magistri deterreantur, legentur septem tractatus Petri Hispani, qui relicitis ambagibus auditores facili via in dialectices penetralia ducet ne in illis ultra aetaem velut apud Syrnios scopulos consenescant." ibid., 40.

Greek was not mentioned on the list of prescribed lectures, but Leipzig definitely offered instruction on this subject. Richard Crocus, a young English scholar, had taught Greek around the middle of the decade; he was succeeded by Peter Mosellanus, a humanist from west Germany.

The Leipzig reforms also initiated a number of minor modifications in the teaching of theology. Of the five daily lectures, two were set aside for instruction on the Bible, and one for the study of the writings of Augustine, Jerome or another one of the Church fathers. Only one daily lecture was devoted to Peter Lombard's Sentences, and one to a "scholastic of the sacred page," preferably Aquinas.[15]

The University of Erfurt also reformed its arts faculty teaching in 1519. Little is known about the background of the reforms, although it appears from indirect evidence that the city council played a role in initiating the changes.[16] The Erfurt reforms did not even go as far as those of Leipzig. No mention was made of adopting the new humanist translations of Aristotle, for example. But Peter of Spain was dropped, and Priscian was now to be utilized for Latin grammar. In adddtion, salaried lectureships were established for instruction in Greek and the studia humanitatis.

---

[15] Ibid., 36.

[16] Georg Oergel, "Die Studienreform der Universität Erfurt vom Jahre 1519," Jahrbücher der Königlichen Akademie gemeinnütziger Wissenschaften zu Erfurt, N.F., XXV (1899), 81-96.

Though moderate, these changes were the first formal concessions made by the University to the humanist educational program. Accordingly, the Erfurt humanists were enthusiastic. Justas Jonas, the young jurist who was elected rector in 1519, was almost incredulous that the University had finally begun to move in the right direction. In June 1519, he wrote to a friend,

> You certainly know our old Erfurt school, in which the sophists have so well dominated things that the whole republic of letters seems to have been reduced to a few feeble dialectical arguments , . . . where almost nothing of good letters is read.

But now he predicted, everything would change and the study of true philosophy would prevail.[17]

In southern Germany, the University of Ingolstadt was the first school to move toward humanist curriculum reform. In 1515, the Bavarian Duke, Wilhelm IV, appointed a commission to examine ways of improving the University. Members included Johannes Eck, Luther's later theological opponent, the humanist Johannes Aventinus, court historian and tutor, and several other figures from the University and government. For some reason the new statutes were not promulgated until 1519.[18]

---

[17] Justas Jonas, Briefwechsel, ed. Gustav Kawerau (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1964), 25.

[18] Prantl, Geschichte der Ludwig-Maximillians Universität, I, 200.

They required the use of new humanist translations for all courses dealing with Aristotle, and set up regular classes on the writings of Terence, Cicero and the Italian humanist, Filelfi. They also put an end to the realist-nominalist disputes which had plagued Ingolstadt ever since the 1470's. The statutes abolished all special rules and privileges concerning the *via moderna* and the *via antiqua*. The words, *antiqui*, *moderni*, *realistae* and *modernae* were no longer to be used, and all teachers in the lower faculty were to be known simply as *artisten*.

The new statutes also discontinued the old speculative approach to teaching grammar. Aventinus's *Rudimentes grammatica* became the required text. Aventinus had written the grammar in 1512 and had used it for teaching Duke Wilhelm's two younger brothers, Ludwig and Ernst. The manual included the usual humanist innovations, and included none of the logical analysis of language typical of the medieval texts. As a result, boasted Aventinus, he could cover more material in eight months than the old grammars had covered in three years.[19]

The reform commission had directed Eck to compose a new series of text books for instruction in logic. This task he carried out with great thoroughness. He edited the complete text of the Organon, utilizing the new translation by Argyropulus. He also wrote commentaries on the Organon, the Summula logicales and the Parva logicalia. The books were designed to put an end to the competition between nominalist and realist commentators. Accordingly, Eck borrowed heavily from the writings of all medieval logicians, though usually siding with Occam on most controversial points. Eck was sympathetic to certain humanist ideas, and in his commenatry on the Summula logicales, he affirmed that he wanted to decrease the amount of "sophistical analysis." But there is no sign that Eck was influenced in any way by the ideas of Agricola or Lefèvre.[20]

---

[19] Gerald Strauss, *Historian in an Age of Crisis, The Life and Work of Johannes Aventinus* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963). On his grammar text, 55-59.

Although the new Ingolstadt statutes did not require instruction in Greek, lectures on both Greek and Hebrew were available. In the 1510's Johannes Böschenstein gave a course on Hebrew, and Johannes Agricola lectured on Greek. Then in March, 1520, Eck attracted his friend, Johannes Reuchlin, to Ingolstadt to lecture on the two ancient tongues. Although Reuchlin's association with Luther's opponent infuriated some of the younger humanists such as Hutten, the Ingolstadt scholars considered Reuchlin's presence a great honor for their school. At the time of Reuchlin's arrival, Johannes Gussubelius delivered an oration which praised Reuchlin as a man knowledgeable in three languages and pure theology and philosophy. He predicted that "idleness, barbarism, darkness, ignorance and malicious sophistry" would disappear from the school, to be replaced by "diligence, virtue, light and true learning."[21] Reuchlin received a salary of two hundred guldens, half paid by the University, half by Duke Wilhelm. He lectured twice a day, in the morning on Hebrew and in the afternoon on Greek. The plague drove Reuchlin from Ingolstadt in 1521, but after his departure other less illustrious figures took his place.

---

[20] Prantl, Geschichte des Logik im Abendland, IV, 284-290.

The Ingolstadt statutes were revised again in 1526.[22] The main innovation was the founding of a pedagogium, where young students studied Aventinus's grammar, Vergil, Baptista Mantuanus, poetry-writing and the elements of Greek. In the arts faculty lectures on oratory and letter-writing were added to the list of required courses. Finally in 1535, Eck's commentaries on Peter of Spain were dropped from the curriculum in favor of the work on dialectic by Johannes Caesarius, a text which followed the basic Agricolan premises on the reform of logic.[23]

Political disturbances slowed the pace of reform at the

---

[21] Prantl, Geschichte der Lduwig-Maximillians Universität, I, 206, 207.

[22] Ibid., II, 177-181. [23] Ibid., II, 183.

University of Tübingen. In the late 1510's Duke Ulrich of Württemberg, the University's patron, quarreled with the Swabian League, and its forces expelled him from his lands and sold them to Emperor Charles V; the Emperor, in turn, gave control of the territory to his brother, Ferdinand. Although Ferdinand did not take much interest in the University at first, an important step was taken in 1522 when the imperial government gave the University a stipend to hire Reuchlin as a lecturer on Greek and Hebrew. It also assumed the expenses for publication of a Hebrew Bible, which was to be sold to the students for a price of two florins.[24]

In 1525, Ferdinand initiated a general reform of University practices in all four faculties. "Prompted by the calamaties of the present century," and knowing that "fragile and tottering subtlety had taken the place of solid and admirable teaching of truth and that the perplex opinions of philosophy had supplanted the heavenly mysteries of eloquence," he appointed a commission to revise the statutes.[25] Included on the five-man commission were Ambrose Wydman, a Tübingen prelate and University chancellor, Paul Riccius, a converted Jewish pysician who had previously attended Maximillian, Jacob

---

[24] Roth, ed., Urkunden zur Geschichte der Universität Tübingen, 131.

[25] Ibid., 141, 142.

Spiegel, an old student of Wimpheling and now an imperial secretary, Johannes Faul, a jurist in the service of the Austrian government, and Martin Plantsch, a professor of theology and one of Ferdinand's advisers.

Spiegel, who had already participated in the reformation of the University of Heidelberg, drew up the final reforms and probably exerciesd the greatest influence on their content. The new statutes were a strange amalgam of innovation and traditionalism. As had been done at Ingolstadt, the reformers abolished the division of the arts faculty into nominalist and realists, and while doing so blamed the moderni for causing most of the previous trouble. The new statutes asserted that there was "only one way to truth" and that the old splits had done nothing but cause dissension and pernicious factionalism. The paraphrases of Jacques Lefèvre on logic and physics were substituted for the old translations, which the students "generally loathed." The statutes added that teachers could, if they wished, utilized "old interpreters and commentators who offered fewer sophistical and superfluous matters." Surprisingly, the list of approved authorities included most of the great medieval scholastics—Robert of Lincoln, Albertus Magnus, Aquinas, Scotus, Occam and Egidius of Rome.[26] Peter of Spain's work was also recommended as a possible text on logic, along with the paraphrases of Lefèvre. The statutes added that if these two works still "disgusted" the students, the dialectic of either Agricola or Trapezuntius could be substituted. Special provision was made for the study of moral philosophy, since it offered good preparation for law and theology and was pertinent to the "teaching of right living."

---

[26] Also mentioned were Averroes, Avicenna, Themistius, Simplicius, Alexander and Theophrastus. ibid., 147.

The new statutes also tried to regularize the teaching in the faculty of theology. Provision was made for four regular professors. Each one was to be competent to teach a certain number of Biblical books and one of the books from Lombard's Sentences. Although the Sentences was retained, professors were warned to avoid overly complicated analyses. The statutes stated, "while nevertheless interpreting the text of the master of the Sentences, they should solve the difficulites rising from the text rather briefly and clearly, since we are made sons of God through faith and not through inane and frivolous questions."[27]

Ten years later Count Ulrich won back his territories and initiated Protestantism. Another reform of the statutes followed.[28] Copying the example of several other schools, a pedagogium was established in which beginning students learned Latin grammar, music and choir singing. Older students in the pedagogium continued their grammatical studies and covered works by Terence and Vergil, the letters of Pliny and Cicero and the Colloquies of Erasmus. Finally the highest class in the pedagogium learned the elements of Greek.

---

[27] "Interpretando tamen textum magistri Sententiarum difficultates duntaxat ex isto textu emergentes quanto brevius et lucidius absolvant, quoniam per fidem Filii dei et non per inanes et frivolas questiones, quae sunt inflantis et in aeternum exitium aedificantis." ibid., 143.

[28] Ibid., 176-185.

Candidates for degrees in the faculty of arts were required to continue their study of Greek and to hear regular lectures on rhetoric. A stipend was established for a teacher of Hebrew, but his course was not made required, since as the statutes stated, the language was useful mainly for students going into theology.[29] The elements of dialectic were to be taught from the manual of Caesarius, Melanchthon or another similar author. Aristotle was to be studied from one of the new translations, and teachers were required to make constant references to the original Greek texts. In keeping with the precepts of Protestant piety, stüdents were also required to attend classes in Bible study where the Scriptures were read in the original languages.

The new statutes also altered the teaching of theology. Medieval commentaries and texts were completely done away with.

---

[29] "Wir haben auch gnugsam ursach, warumb die Hebreisch Lection nit ordinaria gemacht, Sonder fry gelassen ist, dann dise Sprach nit allen Studenten sonder allein denjenigen die sich uf die hailigen schrift geben wöllen, fürstendlich und dienstlich ist." ibid., 181.

The faculty was now to consist of two members, one lecturing on the New Testament with reference to the Greek original, the other on the Old Testament with reference to the original Hebrew. It was also ordered that the lecturer on the New Testament should comment on a Summa of Christian teaching, in all probability, Melanchthon's Loci Communes.

Reforms usually went slower at the older institutions in the Empire. This was the case at the University of Vienna, the school which had led in the adoption of humanism all through the fifteenth century. The 1520's were particularly difficult times for the Austrian institution.[30] The plague struck in 1521, and the constant threat from the Turks caused a drastic reduction in student enrollment. A year after the Turkish attack on Vienna in 1529, there were only about thirty students in the whole school, and the faculties of law and theology all but stopped giving regular lectures.[31] To compound the school's financial crisis, the large number of troops in the area caused a marked increase in prices.

In 1524 the Austrian government attempted to institute some reforms, and a sketch of possible changes was drawn up by some unknown official. Most of the proposals dealt with administration and discipline, although one suggested that the University should establish a stipend for lectures on both Greek and Hebrew. The eighteenth-century chronicler of the school, Sebastian Mitterdorfer, claimed that after 1524, no one could be promoted in the faculty of arts unless he had studied Greek.[32] But the lack of money prevented the hiring of the necessary teachers, so there is probably little truth to his assertion. Four years later the University admitted to King Ferdinand that financial difficulties had made the implementation of the 1524 proposals impossible.[33]

---

[30] Arthur Goldmann, Die Wiener Universität, 1519-1740 (Vienna: Gilhofer & Ranschburg, 1917).

[31] Kink, op. cit., I, part 1, 255.

Thus in 1528 Ferdinand appointed another commission to find measures for the school's revival. The commission recommended the adoption of the reformed statutes accepted by Tübingen in 1525. They also set forth several plans to raise the money necessary to carry out the changes. They proposed that the Austrian prelates be encouraged to donate more money for the University's support and also suggested confiscating the property of two monasteries which had suffered war damage and were no longer occupied. But the Turkish siege in 1529 prevented any action on the proposed changes.[34]

---

[32] Sebastian Mitterdorfer, Conspectus Historiae Universitatis Viennensis, II (Vienna: Schwendimann, 1724), 117.

[33] Goldmann, op. cit., 19.

[34] Ibid.

Finally in the 1530's conditions stabilized, and with the help of the Austrian government, the University of Vienna again became an active and flourishing institution. In 1533 Ferdinand put through a number of measures which solved the school's administrative and financial problems. And four years later, a thorough reform of teaching took place. For the faculty of arts, the government promised to support twelve regular professors.[35] The first was to teach Latin grammar from Priscian, with the aid of Valla's _Elegantiae_ or Erasmus's _Copia rerum et verborum_. Another taught Greek and was to lecture on authors such as Aristophanes, Lucian, Demosthenes, Homer and Euripidies. A third taught Hebrew grammar either from the text of Reuchlin or David Kimchi. The fourth salaried professor taught dialectic, in part from Aristotle, but also from Agricola, Valla, Cicero's _Topics_, Porphyry and Politian. The _studia humanitatis_ received three lectureships, one each in poetry, rhetoric and history. The latter was to lecture on the works of Sallust, Livy, Cicero, Curtius, Tacitus and Valerius Maximus. Mathematics received two professors as did moral philosophy and natural philosophy. The teaching of natural philosophy was to be based on Aristotle in proper translation, while the teaching of moral philosophy was to be based on Aristotle along with a number of other "acceptable" works such as Plato's Republic and Cicero's De amicitia and De senectute.

---

[35] Kink, _op. cit._, II, 342-370.

The new statutes also affected the teaching of theology. The faculty consisted of three professors, each lecturing once a day on the Bible. As aids in interpretation, the writings of the Church fathers were recommended exclusively. The statutes added at the end that one professor might want to lecture on a scholastic writer if the students found it desirable.

The reforms at the University of Heidelberg were unique, for the impetus toward change came from within the faculty of arts rather than from the advisers and councillors of the ruling prince. In 1513 the Heidelberg arts faculty had already unsuccessfully petitioned the University for a salaried lecturer in the studia humanitatis. Seven years later, in September, 1520, the same faculty of arts decided on its own initiative to assume the costs of publishing revised translations of Aristotle for the use of their students. The deacon, who recorded the decision, pointed out that there had been many complaints about the old renderings, and added that "for the most part all the other universities had given up old methods and amended their studies."[36]

---

[36] Winckelmann, Urkundenbuch der Universität Heidelberg, I, 213.

In August, 1521, the faculty again appealed to the University council to take measures to halt the downward slide of the faculty of arts and the University as a whole. The faculty's petition stated that once the faculty of arts had been one of Germany's most flourishing, but now suffered "contempt and disdain" because it had become "flabby and enfeebled."[37] It asserted that the lack of qualified teachers in Greek and Hebrew was largely responsible for the faculty's poor reputation. The authors of the petition pointed out that Tübingen had greatly increased its stature by attracting Reuchlin to the school. They recommended that the University council in co-operation with the Elector make an effort to bring Erasmus to Heidelberg. Nothing came of the faculty's appeal. As the records flatly stated, "to this letter there simply was no reply." The deacon added in his report that as a result, "the more studious among the students, . . . loathing our University's way and order of teaching and treating the arts," had left for Tübingen or other schools, "in search of improving their studies."[38]

---

[37] " . . . et quae olim inter totius Germaniae Academias omnium fuerat florentissima, hodie flaccescentem et marcidam atque propediem interituram audimus predicari." Hautz, op. cit., I, 369.

[38] "Interim aliquot studiosiores dicipuli hinc solverunt nostrarum lectionum, praesertim Aristotelicarum pertaesi: Partim abitum parantes, suaso praeceptorum manserunt, ducti spe studiorum emendationis futurae, partim causantes morae

Although the University never attracted Erasmus to its lecture halls, it did have a teacher of Hebrew in the academic year, 1521-1522. Johannes Böschenstein received a salary of just under forty guldens to give his lectures; the University treasury, the faculty of arts and the faculty of theology each donated ten guldens, while the jurists contributed five or six guldens and the physicians only one or two. But the Elector was not able to add any further support, and in the spring of 1522, Böschenstein left ob stipendii tenuitatem.[39]

Perhaps on the insistence of the Heidelberg faculty of arts, late in 1522 the Palatine Elector decided to investigate the possibility of reforming teaching in all the faculties. He appointed his Chancellor, Florentius of Venningen to take charge of the proceedings. The Chancellor asked three Heidelberg graduates to write down their suggestions for reforming the school. The three men were Jacob Wimpheling, and two of his former students, Johannes Sturm, the Strasburg pedagogue, and Jacob Spiegel, a secretary for the imperial government.[40]

All three agreed that the force holding up reform was the faculty of theology. Spiegel plainly stated that "the

---

hujus negotii impatientiam ad Tybingense Gymnasium, partim ad alia concesserunt." ibid., I, 370.

[39] Ibid., 371.

[40] Proposals printed by Winckelmann, op. cit., I, 214-219.

reformation of study at Heidelberg must begin with the theologians, although they will fight against it harder than anyone." They agreed that instruction on the Bible and Church fathers should replace the emphasis on medieval authorities. Sturm and Spiegel both suggested that members of the mendicant orders should take care of teaching authors such as Aquinas and Scotus. For the faculty of arts all three men called for an improvement in grammar instruction and recommended the reading of classical literature as an aid to teaching. Sturm and Spiegel both stressed the need for salaried professors of Greek and Hebrew. The three men disagreed about what to do with the writings of Aristotle. Sturm and Spiegel recommended the retention of his various works, but only if used in one of the new translations; Wimpheling, however, advised the discontinuation of lectures on Aristotle's _Physics_ and _De generatione_, claiming that the time would be better spent on something by Cicero on moral philosophy. There was also some disagreement on the teaching of logic. Sturm recommended the use of Agricola's _De inventione_, but Wimpheling wanted the retention of Aristotle and Peter of Spain, claiming that Agricola's work was "too subtle."

The Elector announced the reforms in December, 1522, but since the statutes were destroyed in the late seventeenth century, it is impossible to know what specific changes took place.[41] For the faculty of arts, it is almost certain that the new statutes made provisions for regular lectures on Greek, Hebrew, poetry and rhetoric. In 1523 the University hired Hermann Buschius to give lectures on the studia humanitatis. He was paid a salary of sixty florins, which would be raised to eighty florins if he refrained from giving private lessons. Simon Grynäus was hired away from the University of Basel to lecture on Greek, while a certain Sebastian Münster was contracted to teach Hebrew.[42]

No school had more difficulty incorporating humanist ideas than the University of Cologne. The attacks on the University during the Reuchlin affair had undoubtedly caused some anti-humanist sentiment, especially among the theologians. The prohibition of teaching pagan poetry in 1516 has already been mentioned in the previous chapter. In spite of the emotions raised during the Reuchlin affair, several humanists had taught at Cologne during the 1510's. Buschius lectured privately on poetry, rhetoric and moral philosophy, Johannes Caesarius, a regular correspondent of Erasmus, gave lessons on Greek, and Johannes Phrysemius utilized Agricola's De inventione for the teaching of dialectic. He even published two editions of the work in the early 1520's. But the University made no official recognition of these humanists or their educational ideals.

---

[41] August Thorbecke, Statuten und Reformationen der Universität Heidelberg vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1891).

[42] Hautz, op. cit., I, 372, 373.

The faculty of arts reformed its statutes in 1523, but it made very few concessions to the humanist program.[43] Cicero's rhetoric was listed among the required lectures, and Cicero and Vergil were recommended as grammatical aids, as were "books on elegancies of words and sentences by proper authors." To carry out the lectures on rhetoric the Cologne city council agreed to pay the salary for a regular teacher of oratory, Johannes Sobius.[44] But the new statutes made no mention of using new translations of Aristotle, the Doctrinale of Alexander Villedieu continued to be used for the teaching of Latin grammar and the writings of Peter of Spain were retained as the main texts for logic.

In 1525, under the rectorship of Arnold von Tungern, it was decided to attempt a more thorough reform of the University. Each faculty was to draw up a list of desired reforms and appoint deputies which could meet as a group and present a list of proposed changes to the Cologne city council. The proposals were sent to the council on April 24, 1525.[45]

---

[43] Printed by von Bianco, op. cit., I, part 2, 288-316, though with the incorrect date of 1522; see Keussen, "Regesten und Auszüge . . . ." 375.

[44] Keussen, "Regesten und Auszüge. . . ." 375.

As it turned out, the "reformers" were actually academic conservatives in regard to curriculum change. The petition blamed the University's difficulties on many things:

> by the destiny of God, through war and dissension, by which lands and peoples are armed and militarized, through multitudinous deaths, through changes and troubles with the coinage, through uncertainty of roads and through many other things which lie not in the hands of man but with God. [46]

The proposals show no awareness that the traditional teaching methods at Cologne were in any way defficient. For the most part they were nothing more than demands for the confirmation of various privileges. Among other things, the University demanded that the city council should suppress the trivial schools in the nearby areas, control the "presumptuous townspeople who pelt the students with rocks and mud and pull their hair," halt the flow of "satirical and heretical" literature in the area, prevent druggists from practicing medicine and end all tolls and special taxes for members of the

---

[45] Printed by von Bianco, op. cit., I, part 2, 316-326; also printed in G. Eckert, ed., "Rector, Decane, Doctoren und Meister der Universität zu Köln ersuchen den Rath ihnen zur Reformirung u. zur Hebung der Universität zu reichen," *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein*, XVII (1865), 219-227.

[46] ". . . der welcher ein Theil herkommen durch Verhängenüs Gots des Almächtigen, als schwerliche Kregen und Orlof, dadurch die Land und Städte verarmt und verhert sein, düre Zyt, stetliche Sterf, Pestilenz, Verenderung und Beschwerung der Müntz, Unfreylichkeit und Unsecherheit der Weeg, . . . und just weil andere dergleichen Sachen, die nit seint in Menschenhenden und Macht besseeren, dan allein ligend an der Gnade Gots dess Herren. . . ." von Bianco, op. cit., I, part 2, 316.

University. There was no request about hiring new instructors for any of the humanist disciplines. In fact one of the demands presented to the council seems to have been directed against the humanists. The second proposal called for the limitation of extraordinary lectures, which according to the authors of the petition, interfered with required course work, drew students away from good teaching, inspired indifference to the "good arts" and filled the students's minds with "frivolous matter." All of these accusations were typical anti-humanist complaints.

Several men attached to the University realized the conservative nature of the petition and decided to submit separate reports of their own. Quirinus von Wilich, for example, a suffragan bishop in the Cologne archdiocese, wrote the council that the main reason for the University's difficulties was its outdated curriculum. The regaining of certain privileges was important for the school, but he added that it would collapse if it continued to oppose the innovations in teaching which other schools and universities had already adopted. He remarked that if this advice had been followed twenty years ago there would have been no decline at the University of Cologne. Count Hermann von Neuenar and Arnold von Wesel, a student in theology, also sent letters to the council which expressed agreement with von Wilich.[47]

The city council took no action on any of the proposals, claiming that other business was keeping it occupied. By the summer months, the students in the faculty of arts were disgusted that the old curriculum had not been altered. As a result disturbances broke out in the student quarter of the city. The records of the faculty of arts read,

> In the same time, a tumult sprang up among the students in the faculty of arts; for they loathed to hear only the old commentaries according to the teaching of Thomas and Albertus Magnus; they considered these things blown up, rather prolix, unuseful and fruitless, and appealed that the text of Aristotle be interpreted according to a more polished translation; also, that not just Aristotle, but all the liberal arts be taught, so that the title by which they are called masters of the liberal arts will not lose all its meaning. [48]

The students sent a petition to the deacon of the faculty of arts complaining about the education they were receiving at Cologne. They pointed out that their parents had sent them to the University to be schooled in the seven liberal arts. But they complained that of the arts, only dialectic was lectured on thoroughly, and this in a barbarian manner. They

---

[47] Printed in L. Ennen, Geschichte der Stadt Köln, IV, (Cologne: Schwannschen Verlagshandlung, 1875), 214, 215.

[48] "Eodem tempore alia tumultatio in Facultate Artium in suis suppositis et discipulis suborta est; nam commentaris antiqua secundum doctrinam Thomae et Alberti Magni conflata, quasi prolixa, inutilia et infructuosa fastidiebant audire solum petentes textum Aristotelis secundum politorem traductionem eis interpretari, et non solum Aristotelis doctrinam, verum omnes artes liberales, ne evacuaretur titulus quo Magistri Artium liberalium appellantur." von Bianco, op. cit., I, Part I, 409.

demanded that besides dialectic, they also receive instruction in rhetoric, music, arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, physics and logic, "all arranged by most acceptable men and translated by the most learned." They mentioned Agricola as an excellent authority for dialectic.[49]

The student disturbances had definite impact on the course of events. On August 12, 1525, the University officials again met with the city council, and again they asked for a confirmation of the privileges they had sought in April. But they also promised to draw up a new lecture schedule for teaching in the faculty of arts. One month later, on September 9, they presented their outline to the government.[50] If carried out, the proposals would have satisfied most of the students. A Latin grammar written by Perotti or another Italian humanist replaced Alexander's Doctrinale; the compendiums on logic by Jacques Lefèvre replaced Peter of Spain. Regular times were set aside for courses on letter-writing, oratory and moral philosophy, the latter to be taught from Cicero. The writings of Aristotle were to be studied in the best Latin speech, in translations by Argyropulus, Trapezuntius or Boethius. But the affair dragged on with no result, The University could not carry through the curriculum reforms without financial support from the city; and the city was unwilling to underwrite the costs as long as the University insisted on the confirmation of the various privilèges. Finally after October 11, the two groups stopped meeting entirely. The University held a number of meetings in the following months to decide on a course of action, but nothing else happened.

---

[49] *Ibid.* [50] *Ibid.*, part 2, 326-328.

The following year the city council took the initiative in another attempt to reform the curriculum. It appointed Johannes Sobius, the salaried professor of oratory to take charge of the process. But he was an old man and half-blind, hardly the man to carry out a reform of the University. On October 26, 1526, he wrote to the city council that he was giving up his efforts because of the extensive opposition he had encountered.[51] The University and the city council tried to get together again in 1528 and 1532, but the two parties were not able to resolve their differences. As a result, there was no formal curriculum reform at Cologne until the 1540's and 50's.[52]

Formal change also came very late to the University of Frankfurt-am-Oder, at the end of 1540 or the beginning of 1541. In all likelihood the school had already adopted many of the new practices, but had done so without any alteration of the statutes. But after the Brandenburg Elector, Joachim II, adopted Protestantism, he accepted the advice of Melanchthon to promulgate new statutes for the school. The following schedule shows the lectures which were delivered at Frankfurt following the reforms of 1540-1541.[53] Its contents give a good idea of what German students were studying in the middle of the sixteenth century at a Protestant University.

---

[51] Ennen, op. cit., IV, 217, 218.

[52] Keussen, Die alte Universität Köln, 371.

5 A.M.	Dialectic from work of either Melanchthon or Caesarius.
6 A.M.	Poetry from Vergil or Ovid.
6 A.M.	Hebrew
7 A.M.	Greek literature from Homer, Demosthenes or occasionally Aristotle.
7 A.M.	Latin grammar from the text of Melanchthon.
8 A.M.-9 A.M.	left open for lectures in theology.
11 A.M.	Music
Noon	Latin literature from Terence, Plautus, Tacitus.
1 P.M.	Moral philosophy from Aristotle and Cicero.
1 P.M.	Mathematics from Euclid's *Arithmetica communi* and *Theoricis planetarum*.
2 P.M.	Oratory from various works by Cicero.
3 P.M.	Greek grammar from text of Melanchthon.
3 P.M.	Letter writing from Cicero.
4 P.M.	Rhetoric from text of Melanchthon, *Ad Herennium* of Cicero or *Copia rerum et verborum* by Erasmus. [54]

No set plan of lectures was stipulated for theology, although it was ordered that professors should spend most of their time on the exposition of the Bible.

---

[53] Printed by Bauch, *Die Anfänge der Universität Frankfurt-am-Oder*, 144, 145; also by Ernst Friedländer, "Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Universität Frankfurt am Oder," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte*, VIII (1895), 213-215.

[54] If it sounds any less horrendous, classes started at six A.M. during the winter months.

At other schools there is no evidence that formal curriculum reform took place, although it seems very doubtful that any of them lagged too far behind their sister institutions. We know that the University of Freiburg-im-Breisgau began to pay regular teachers of Greek and Hebrew in 1520 or 1521;[55] but what other specific changes took place is not certain. In 1521 the University of Greifswald made courses on poetry and rhetoric required for degrees in the faculty of arts, and when in 1543 the Duke of Pomerania turned Protestant, another reform of the statutes took place.[56] As usual, the lack of documentation prevents saying anything definite about the Universities of Mainz and Rostock.

If Marsilius of Inghen, Henry of Langenstein or any of the other early leaders of the German university movement could have returned to Germany around 1530 to view their creations, they surely would have been perplexed and confused. They would have found a new generation of students who had never studied a word from Peter of Spain, Alexander Villedieu and most of the other medieval commentators they had lectured on in the late fifteenth century. They would have seen the students studying Aristotle, but in unfamiliar Latin versions, and sometimes even in the Greek original. They would have seen the students studying dialectic, but they would have found the standard texts by Melanchthon, Agricola and Caesarius far different from the works on the subject they had known. In addition they would have seen men lecturing on a host of unfamiliar subjects—poetry, rhetoric, letter-writing, Greek, Hebrew, mathematics and moral philosophy. It would have been hard to convince these men that somewhere a revolution in studies had not occurred.

---

[55] Schreiber, op. cit., 193-197.

[56] Kosegarten, op. cit., I, 171; II, 126.

The humanists caused a revolution in university education in spite of the fact that most of them were not revolutionaries themselves. Most of them had no desire to completely overthrow scholastic educational practices; nor did they have a well-structured program to substitute for many of the old practices they decried. For most of them an improvement in Latin grammar instruction and in inclusion of rhetoric and poetry in the scholastic curriculum was all they ever wanted. Almost to a man they conceded that Aristotle, in proper translation, offered the best preparation for many philosophical and scientific disciplines. Many of them—Wimpheling, Celtis, Bebel, Reuchlin, Pirckheimer—occasionally praised some of the older scholastic authorities such as Aquinas and Albertus Magnus. Others saw nothing wrong with writing dedicatory poems which were published along with works by scholastic writers.

The humanist' relationship with the scholastics in the daily life of the university was not so stormy as most critics have imagined. There were, of course, numerous examples of friction. Many of these disputes resulted from disagreements over salary, positions in academic processions and lecture hours—kinds of squabbles which will occur as long as universities exist. Such spats were more frequent for the humanists because of their unique position within the university structure; through most of the period they received their salary directly from the princely patron and were not regular members of the faculty of arts. Many of the scholastics considered the humanists as troublesome upstarts whose pleasant excursions into classical literature drew students away from the more useful courses on logic and philosophy. Thus serious attempts to make humanist courses required met opposition at Vienna in the 1490's and at Leipzig in the early sixteenth century. Other scholastics distrusted humanist poetry as potentially dangerous to youthful morality. Thus the University of Cologne twice tried to limit courses on the distasteful pagan poets. But for every example of friction, there are many more examples of peaceful coexistance and friendly relationships between humanist and scholastic. While some of the scholastics considered the humanists as unwanted intruders, most tolerated and some even encouraged the humanists' efforts.

There were also a number of literary controversies which seem to have involved the issue of humanism versus scholasticism. But Kristeller's comment on these literary feuds in Italy also fits the situation well in Germany:

> Moreover, it would be quite wrong to consider these controversies as serious battles for basic principles whereas many of them were meant to be merely personal feuds, intellectual tournaments, or rhetorical exercises. Finally any attempt to reduce these controversies to one issue must fail since the discussions were concerned with many diverse and overlapping issues. 57

Polich's battle with Wimpina over the relationship of poetry and theology was largely the result of a personality clash; Locher's controversy with Zingel and Wimpheling was caused by the poet's own irrational behavior. Even in the Reuchlin affair, humanism was only one of many issues involved.

The transformation of medieval scholasticism had its roots in what appeared to be the most innocuous area of humanist concern, namely in the field of Latin grammar. For medieval thinkers, grammar was primarily preparation for later studies of logic and dialectic. The student who learned his grammar from Alexander Villedieu and his commentators studied language to learn the complex terminologies and distinctions necessary for the understanding of terminist logic. Language was conceived as something which had to conform to and be controlled by philosophy and logic. To learn the modes of

---

[57] Kristeller, Renaissance Thought, 114.

signification and supposition theory was more important than learning to write and elegant letter or to deliver a moving oration. Thus when the humanists attacked the speculative grammarians, they were undermining the whole basis of late scholastic discourse. The humanists rejected the logical analysis of language and taught grammar in a descriptive and literary way. Their goal was to prepare the student for an appreciation of classical prose and poetry, not for an understanding of logic. A student who exclusively studied grammars written by Perger, Perotti or even Wimpheling would have appreciated the dialectical writings of Agricola or Melanchthon, but they would have had a good deal of difficulty understanding the logical works of Peter of Spain. And a student who could not understand the terminist logic of Peter of Spain would have been even less apt to understand the late scholastic commentaries on Aristotle or the writings of the late medieval theologians.

By 1520 humanist attacks on scholasticism, which had been so common for better than fifty years, gradually disappeared. In 1518 Hermann Buschius wrote a defense of the studia humanitatis which set forth the old arguments against the detractors of good literature.[58] He praised eloquence and the beauties of poetry, attacked the sophists for their interests in dialectic and logic and cited the usual assortment of Church fathers and Popes who had pursued humanist studies. But as the German universities began to drop the old medieval authors and incorporate courses on rhetoric, poetry, Greek and Hebrew, such literary exercises lost their meaning. In 1524 the Erfurt poet, Eobanus Hessus wrote his friend Johannes Lang that there really was no longer any point in attacking the sophists, since there were not that many sophists left.[59] The humanists had become part of the German academic "establishment."

---

[58] Hermann Buschius, Vallum humanitatis (Cologne: N. Caesarem, 1518).

---

[59] Krause, Helius Eobanus Hessus, II, 364, 365.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES, LITERARY

Aesticampianus, Johannes. "Aesticampianus Leipziger Abschiedesrede," ed. Otto Clemen. *Neue Jahrbücher für Pädagogik*, II (1899), 236-240.

Aesticampianus, Johannes. *Septem divi Hieronymi epistolae ad vitam instituendam accomodatissime. . .* Leipzig: Lother. 1508.

Agricola, Rudolph. *De inventione dialectica libri tres, cum scholiis Johannis Mattaei Phrissemii*. Paris: Simon Colinaeus, 1538.

Agricola, Rudolph. *Libellus de ratione docendi*. Freiburg: Johannes Rivius, 153?.

Agricolae, Rudolphi. *Rodolphi Agricolae Lucubrationes*. ed. Alard. Cologne: John Gymnich, 1539.

Agricola, Rudolph. *Rodolphi Agricolae Opuscula*. ed. Peter Gilles. Louvain: Th. Martens, 1511.

Agricola, Rudolph. "Unedierte Briefe von Rudolph Agricola," ed. Karl Hartfelder. *Festschrift der Badischen Gymnnasien*. Karlsruhe: Hofbuchdruckerei, 1886.

d'Andelys, Henri. "The Battle of the Liberal Arts," ed. and trans. John L. Paetow. *Two Medieval Satires on the University of Paris*. Berkley: U. of California Press, 1927.

Bebel, Heinrich. *Ars versificandi et carminum condendorum. .* Strasburg: Prüfs, 1507,

Bebel, Heinrich. *Commentaria epistolarum conficiendarum. . .* Strasburg: Schürer, 1513.

Bebel, Heinrich. *Facitien, Drei Bücher*. ed. Gustav Bebermeyer. Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1930.

Bebel, Heinrich. *Liber Hymnorum*. Tübingen: Otman, 1501.

Bebel, Heinrich. *Opusculum de institutione puerorum*. Strasburg: Schürer, 1511.

Bebel, Heinrich. *Schwänke*. tr. Albert Wesselski. Munich: Müller, 1907.

Biel, Gabriel. *Canonis missae Expositio*. ed. Heiko Oberman. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1967.

Biel, Gabriel. *Collectiorum ex Occamo circa quatuor sentiarum*. Frankfurt: Minerva, 1965. (photoreprint of original 1501 edition printed in Tübingen).

Bömer, A., ed. *Die lateinische Schülergesprache der Humanisten*. Berlin: Hanwitz, 1897.

Brandis, Carl G., ed. "Passio Esticampiani secundem Joannem," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Thüringische Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, N.F. Beiheft 8 (1917), 1-11.

Brant, Sebastian. *Ship of Fools*. tr. Edwin Zeydel. New York: Columbia University Press, 1944.

Buschius, Hermann. *Claudiani Proserpinae captus cum Hermanni Buschii erudito ac familiari commentario*. Cologne(?): 1514.

Buschius, Hermann. *Vallum humanitatis*. Cologne: N. Caesarem, 1518.

Celtis, Conrad. *Ars versificandi et carminum*. Leipzig: 1493.

Celtis, Conrad. *Briefwechsel*. ed. Hans Rupprich. Munich: Beck, 1934.

Celtis, Conrad. *Fünf Bücher Epigramme*. ed. Karl Hartfelder. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1963.

Celtis, Conrad. *Libri Odarum Quattuor*, ed. Felicitas Pindter. Leipzig: Teubner, 1937.

Celtis, Conrad. *Quattuor libri amorum*. ed. Felicitas Pindter. Leipzig: Teubner, 1934.

Celtis, Conrad. *Selections from Conrad Celtis*. ed. Leonard Forster. Cambridge: University Press, 1948.

Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Epistles of Erasmus*. ed. and trans. Francis M. Nichols. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1904.

Expurgatio rectoris et consilii almi ac celebris gymnasii Ingolstadiensis pro divino Georgio Zingel . . . contra invectivam sub velamine apologiae a Jacob Locher Ph—o. no place or date. (copy in Bavarian State Library, Munich).

Gratius, Ortwin. *Hoc in opusculo contra speculum oculare Joannis Reuchlin Phorcensis hec in fidei et ecclesie tuitionem continentur, etc . . . .* Cologne (?): 1513.

Gratius, Ortwin. *Lamentationes obscurorum virorum*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1864.

Gresemundt, Dietrich. *Bonarum septem artium liberalium Apologiam . . . .* Mainz: 1494.

Hochstraten, Jacob von. *Apologia . . . contra dialogum Georgio Benigno Archiespiscopo Nazareno in causa Joannis Reuchlin ascriptum*. Cologne: Quentel, 1518.

Hochstraten, Jacob von. *Apologia secunda contra defensionem quandam in favorem Joannis Reuchlin . . . .* Cologne: Quentel, 1518.

Hochstraten, Jacob von. *Destructio Cabale*. Cologne: Quentel, 1518.

Hutten, Ulrich von. *Opera omnia*. 6 vols. ed. Eduard Böcking. Leipzig: Teubner, 1859-1870.

Hutten, Ulrich von, et al. *On the Eve of the Reformation—Letters of Obscure Men*. New York: Harper and Row, 1964.

Kraft, Karl and Wilhelm, eds. *Briefe und Documente aus der Zeit der Reformation im 16. Jahrhundert*. Elberfeld: Lucas, 1876.

Locher, Jacob. *Apologia Jacobi Locher Philomusi contra poetarum Hostem Georgium Zingel Theologem Ingolstadiensem*. no place or date. (copy in Bavarian State Library, Munich).

Locher, Jacob. *Continentur in hoc opuscula . . . Vitiosa sterilis Mulae ad Musam lepidate praedictam Comparatio, etc. . . . .* Nuremberg: Weissenburger, 1506.

Locher, Jacob. *In anticategoriam rectoris cujiusdam et conciliabuli Gymnasii Ingolstadiensis responsio compnediosa cum declaratione Zingelensis factionis*. no place or date. (copy in Bavarian State Library, Munich).

Locher, Jacob. *Theologica emphasis sive dialogus super eminentia quattuor doctorum ecclesiae*. Basel: 1496.

Luther, Martin. *Selections*. ed. John Dillinger. New York: Doubleday, 1961.

Luther, Martin. *Werke*, I. Weimar: Hofbuchdruckeri, 1930.

Melanchton, Phillip. *Opera omnia*. 28 vols. ed. Charles Bretschneider. Halle: C.A. Schwetschke, 1834-1860.

Mellerstadt, Martin. *Laconismus tumultuarius . . . in defensionem poetices contra quendam theologum editus*. Leipzig: J. Thanner, 1501.

Mellerstadt, Martin. *In Wimpinas offensiones et denigrationes Sacretheologe*. Leipzig: Lother, 1503.

Mutian, Conrad. *Der Briefwechsel des Mutianus Rufus*. ed. Carl Krause. Kassel: A. Fregeschmidt, 1885.

Perger, Bernard. *Nova grammática*. Basel: Lamparter, 1506.

Peter of Spain. *The Summulae Logicales of Peter of Spain*. ed. and trans. Joseph P. Mullally. South Bend, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1945.

Peuerbach, George. "Eine Ansprache Georgs von Peuerbach an seine Hörer," ed. Karl Grossman. *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Geschichtsforschung*, XLII (1927), 359-361.

Pfefferkorn, Johannes. *Brantspiegell*. Cologne: Gutschaiff, 1512.

Pfefferdorn, Johannes. *Handtspiegel wider und gegen die Jüden*. Cologne: 1511.

Pfefferkorn, Johannes. *Defensio contra famosas obscurorum virorum epistolas*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1864.

Piccolomini, Aeneas Sylvius. *Ausgewählte Texte*. ed. Berthe Widmer, Basel: Schwabe, 1960.

Piccolomini, Eneas Silvius, *Briefwechsel*. ed. Rudolph Wolken. Vienna: Universitäts Buchhandlung, 1909.

Pirckheimer, Willibald. *Briefwechsel*, 2 vols. ed. Emil Reicke. Munich: Beck, 1940, 1956.

Pirckheimer, Willibald, ed. *Luciani Piscator seu Reviviscentes*. Tübingen: Anshelm, 1518.

Pirckheimer, Willibald. *Opera politica, historica, philologica*. ed. Melchior Goldast. Frankfurt: Fischer, 1610.

Reuchlin, Johannes. *De arte caballistica*. Tübingen: Anshelm, 1516 (facsimile reprint, Stuttgart: Frommann, 1964).

Reuchlin, Johannes. *Augenspiegel*. Tübingen: Anshelm, 1512. (facsimile reprint, ed. Bernhard Wendt. *Quellen zur Geschichte des Humanismus und der Reformation*, V (1964).

Reuchlin, Johannes. *Johann Reuchlins Briefwechsel*. ed. Ludwig Geiger. Tübingen: L. Fr. Fues, 1875.

Reuchlin, Johannes. *Defensio Joannis Reuchlin contra calumiatoressuos colonienses*. Tübingen: Anshelm, 1513.

Reuchlin, Johannes. *Gutachten über das Jüdische Schriftum*. trans. Antoine Leinz von Dessauer. Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke, 1965.

Reuchlin, Johannes. *Komödien*. ed. Hugo Holstein. Halle: Waisenhause, 1888.

Reuchlin, Johannes. *De rudimentis hebraicis*. Tübingen: Anshelm, 1506.

Reuchlin, Johannes. *De verbo mirifico*. Basel: 1494 (facsimile reprint, Stuttgart: Fromman, 1964).

Reuchlin, Johannes. "Zur Biographie und Correspondenz Johannes Reuchlin's," Adalbert Horawitz, ed. *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, LXXXV (1877), 117-190.

Seitz, Friedrich. *Ad prestantem et magne eruditionis vir um Magistrum Conradum Wimpine pro defensione sacre theologie et theologie veritatis*. no place or date. (copy in Bavarian State Library, Munich).

Riegger, Josef, ed. *Amoenitates Literarie Friburgenes*, II. Ulm: Lebrecht, 1775. (contains correspondence and exerpts from works by Wimpheling).

Tentzel, Wilhelm, ed. *Supplementum Historiae Gothanae*, I. Jena: Joannis Bielckius, 1701. (contains letters of Mutian and other Erfurt humanists).

Tungern, Arnold von. *Articuli sive propositiones nimis suspecte ex libello theutonico domini Jannis Reuchlin legum doctoris*. Cologne: 1513.

Villedieu, Alexander de. *Das Doctrinale des Alexander de Villa Dei*. ed. Dietrich Reichling. Berlin: A. Hoffman & Co. 1893.

Wimpheling, Jacob. *Contra turpem libellum philomusi, Defensio theologie scolastice & neotericorum*. Nuremberg: Weissenburger, 1510.

Wimpheling, Jacob. *Elegantiarum Medulla*. Speyer: 1493.

Wimpheling, Jacob. *Jakob Wimphelings pädagogische Schriften*. ed. and trans. Joseph Freundgen. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1898.

Wimpheling, Jacob. "Jacobus Wimphelingius Stylpho," *Lateinische Litteraturdenkmäler des XV. und XVI. Jahrhunderts*, VI (1892), 1-16.

Wimpheling, Jacob. "Neun Briefe von und an Jakob Wimpheling," ed. Gustav Knod. *Vierteljahrsschrift für Kultur und Litteratur der Renaissance*, I (1886), 229-243.

Wimpina, Knorad. *Apologeticus in Sacretheologie defensionem . . . .* Leipzig: 1505.

Wimpina, Konrad. *Responsio et Apologia . . contra laconismum cuiusdam medici pro defensione Sacretheologie et veritas fidei*. Leipzig: 1503.

PRIMARY SOURCES, UNIVERSITIES

Bauch, Gustav, ed. *Acten und Urkunden der Universität Frankfurt a.O*, VI. Breslau: M.&H. Marcus, 1906.

Bauch, Gustav, ed. "Das älteste Decanatsbuch der philosophischen Fackultät an der Universität zu Frankfurt a.O.," *Jahres-Bericht der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für vaterländische Cultur*, Part III. LIV (1897), 2-96.

Denifle Heinrich, ed. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*. Paris: Delain, 1894.

Fletcher, J.M. and Ott, H., eds. *The Medieval Statutes of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Freiburg im Breisgau*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University Press, 1964.

Friedensburg, Walter, ed. *Urkundenbuch der Universität Wittenberg*, I. Halle: Historische Kommission, 1926.

Friedländer, ed. "Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Universität Frankfurt-am-Oder," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte*, VIII (1895), 207-220.

Friedländer, Ernst and Malagola, Carlo, eds. *Acta Nationis Germanicae Universitatis Bononiensis*. Berlin: G. Reimeri, 1887.

Keussen, Hermann, ed., "Regesten und Auszüge zur Geschichte der Universität Köln," *Mitteilungen aus dem Stadtarchiv von Köln*, XXXVI-XXXVII (1918), 1-536.

König, J. ed. "Statuta facultatis Theologice Catholici studii Friburgensis," *Freiburger Diocesan Archiv*, XXI (1890).

Muther, Theodor, ed. "Die ersten Statuten der Wittenberger Artistenfäkultät," *Neue Mitteilungen aus dem Gebiet historischantiquarischer Forschungen*, XII (1874), 176-208.

Prantl, Carl, ed. *Geschichte der Ludwig-Maximillians-Universität zu München*, II. Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1872.

Reh, Paul, ed. "Die allgemeine Statuten der Universität Frankfurt-am-Oder, 1510-1610," *Jahresbericht der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für vaterländische Cultur*, 75 (1897), 2-102.

Roth, Rudolph, ed. *Urkunden zur Geschichte der Universität Tübingen*. Tübingen: Laupp'schen Buchhandlung, 1877.

Stübel, Bruno, ed. *Urkundenbuch der Universität Leipzig von 1409 bis 1555*. Leipzig: Geisecke and Devrient, 1879.

Stübel, Bruno, ed., "Ueber die ältesten Vorlesungsver zeichnisse der philosophischen Fakultät an der Leipziger Universität," *Mitteilungen der Geselschaft für deutsche Erziehungs und Schulgeschichte*, VII (1897), 201-209.

Thorndike, Lynn, ed. *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1944.

Weissenborn, J.C. Hermann, ed. *Acten der Erfurter Universität*, II. Halle: Otto Hendel, 1884.

Winckelmann, Eduard. *Urkundenbuch der Universität Heidelberg*, 2 vols. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1886.

Zarncke, Friedrich. *Die Statutenbücher der Universität Leipzig aus den ersten 150 Jahren ihres Bestehens*. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1861.

SECONDARY WORKS ON HUMANISM AND SCHOLASTICISM

Allen, P.S. "Hieronymous Balbus in Paris," *English Historical Review*, LXVII (1902), 417-428.

Allen, P.S. "The Letters of Rudolph Agricola." *English Historical Review*, XXI (1906), 302-317.

Banziger, Paul. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Spätscholastik und des Frühhumanismus in der Schweiz*. Zurich: Leeman & Co., 1945.

Bauch, Gustav. "Bibliograpische Beiträge zur Schulgeschichte des XVI. Jahrhundert," *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für deutsche Erziehungs und Schulgeschichte*, V. (1895), 8, 9.

Bauch, Gustav. "Die Vertreibung des Johannes Rägius Aesticampianus aus Leipzig," *Archiv für Litteraturegeschichte*, XIII (1885), 1-33.

Bauch, Gustav. "Wolfgang Schenck und Nicolaus Harschalk," *Zentralblatt für Bibliotekswesen*, XII (1895), 353-409.

Baron, Hans. "Zur Frage des Ursprungs des deutschen Humanismus," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXXXII (1925), 413-446.

Bebermeyer, Gustav. *Tübinger Dichterhumanisten*. Tübingen: Laupp, 1927.

Bezold, Friedrich von. "Konrad Celtis, der deutsche Erzhumanist," *Historische Zeitschrift*, XLIX (1883), 1-45.

Bezold, Friedrich von. *Rudolph Agricola*. Munich: Akademie Verlag, 1884.

Bömer, A. "Paul Niavis," *Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte*, XI (1892), 51-94.

Bonorand, Conradin. *Vadians Weg vom Humanismus zur Reformation*. St. Gallen: Historischer Verein, 1962.

Brambach, Wilhelm. "Reuchlins Bibliothek," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, N.F. XXXVII (1922), 249-275.

Brod, Max, *Johannes Reuchlin und sein Kampf*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1965.

Burdach, Konrad. "Zur Kenntniss altdeutscher Handschriften und zur Geschichte altdeutscher Litteratur und Kunst," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, VIII (L891), 145-176, 432-488.

Christ, Karl. "Die Bibliothek Reuchlins in Pforzheim," *Beiheft zum Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesens*, 52 (1924), 1-94.

Cornelius, Carl A. *Die Münsterlichen Humanisten und ihr Verhältnisse zur Reformation*. Münster: Theissing, 1851.

Coville, A. Gontier

Coville, A. *Gontier et Pierre Col et l'humanisme en France au temps de Charles VI*. Paris: Librairie Droz, 1934.

Denis, Michael. *Wiens Buchdrucker Geschichte*. Vienna: Wappler, 1782.

Faust, August. "Die Dialektik Rudolf Agricolas," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, N.F. XXXIV (1922), 118-136.

Friedensburg, Walter. "Die Berufung des Johannes Aesticampianus an die Universität Wittenberg," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*. XXI (1924), 146-148.

Geiger, Ludwig. *Johann Reuchlin, sein Leben und Seine Werke*. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1871.

Gilbert, Neal. *Renaissance Concepts of Method*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1950.

Gilson, Eliene. *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. New York: Random House, 1955.

Gottlieb, Theodor. *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Osterreichs*, I. Vienna: Universitatäts Buchdruckeri, 1915.

Grabmann, Martin. "Die geschichtliche Entwicklung der mittelalterlichen Sprachphilosophie und Sprachlogik," *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben*, III. Munich: Max Huebner, 1956, 243-254.

Grüneberg, Theodor. "Martin Pollich von Mellerstadt, der erste Rektor der Wittenberg Universität," *450 Jahre Martin-Luther Universität Halle-Wittenberg*, Leipzig: Leipziger Grossbuchbinderei, 1956, 87-93.

Hain, Ludwig. *Repertorium bibliographicum*, 4 vols. Stuttgart: Gotta, 1826-1838.

Halbauer, Fritz. *Mutianus Rufus und seine Geistesgeschichtliche Stellung*. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1929.

Haller, Johannes. "Heinrich Bebel als Dichter," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, 66 (1929), 51-54.

Hartfelder, Karl. "Conrad Celtis und der Heidelberger Humanistenkreis," *Historische Zeitschrift*, XLVII (1882), 15-36.

Hartfelder, Karl. "Der Humanist Celtis als Lehrer," *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Pädagogik*, XXIX (1883), 299-311.

Hehle, Dr. *Der Schwäbische Humanist Jacob Locher Philomusus*. Ehlingen: C. L. Feger, 1871-1875. (*Programm des Königlichen Gymnasiums in Ehingen*, 1871-72, 1873-74, 1874-75.)

Herding, Otto. "Probleme des frühen Humanismus in Deutschland." *Archiv für Külturgeschichte*, XXXVII (1956), 344-389.

Hermelink, Heinrich. "Die Anfänge des Humanismus in Tübingen," *Württembergische Vierteljahrshefte für Landesgeschichte*, N.F. XV (1906), 319-337.

Hermelink, Heinrich. *Die religiosen Reformbestrebungen des deutschen Humanismus*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1907.

Holborn, Hajo. *Ulrich von Hutten and the German Reformation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937.

Holstein, Hugo. "Zur Biographie Jakob Wimphelings," *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Litteraturgeschichte*, N.F. IV (1891), 227-252.

Howell, Wilbur S. *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700*. Princeton: University Press, 1956.

Joachimsen, Paul. "Frühhumanismus in Schwaben," *Württemburgische Vierteljahrshefte für Landesgeschichte*, N.F. V (1896), 63-126, 256-291.

Joachimsen, Paul. "Der Humanismus und die Entwicklung des deutschen Geistes," *Deutsches Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft*, III (1930), 419-480.

Kisch, Guido. *Zasius und Reuchlin*. Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke, 1961.

Kluge, Otto. "Der Humanismus des 16. Jahrhunderts in seinen Beziehungen zu Kirche und Schule, zu den theologischen und philosophischen Studien," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Erziehung und Unterrichts*, XVII (1927), 1-68.

Klüpfel, E. *De vita et scriptis Conradi Celtis Protucii*. Freiburg: 1827.

Kneale, William and Kneale, Martha. *The Development of Logic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

Knepper, Joseph. *Jakob Wimpheling*. Freiburg-im-Breisgau: Herder, 1902.

Knod, Gustav. "Wimpfeling und die Universität Heidelberg," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, N.F., I (1886), 317-335.

Knowles, David. *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1962.

Krause, Carl. *Helius Eobanus Hessius, sein Leben und seine Werke*. 2 vols. Gotha: Perthes, 1879.

Krebs, Manfred, ed. *Johannes Reuchlin, 1455-1522. Festgabe seiner Vaterstadt Pforzheim zur 500. Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages*. Pforzheim: Selbstverlag der Stadt, 1955.

Kristeller, Paul Oskar. *Renaissance Thought*. New York: Harper & Row, 1961.

Liessem, Hermann. *Hermann von dem Busche, sein Leben und seine Schriften. Programm des Kaiser Wilhelm-Gymnasium zu Köln*. 1884-1889, 1905-1908.

Mestwerdt, Paul. *Die Anfänge des Erasmus, Humanismus und "Devotia Moderna*." Leipzig: Rudolph Haupt, 1917.

Mommsen, Theodor. "Rudolph Agricola's Life of Petrarch," *Traditio*, VIII (1952), 367-386.

Näf, Werner, "Aus der Forschung zur Geschichte des deutschen Humanismus." *Schweizer Beiträge zur allgemeinen Geschichte*. II (1944), 211-226.

Negwer, Joseph. *Konrad Wimpina, Ein catholischer Theologe aus der Reformationzeit*. Breslau: G.P. Aderholz, 1900.

Oberman, Heiko. *The Harvest of Medieval Theology*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.

Offenbacher, Emile, "La Bibliothèque de Willibald Pirckheimer," *La Bibliophilia*, XL (1938), 241-263.

Ong, Walter J. *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Ong, Walter J. *Ramus, and Talon Inventory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Panzer, Wolfgang. *Annales Typographici*, 11 vols. Nuremberg: Eberhard, 1793-1803.

Peschek, M. "Erinnerung an zwei einst sehr berühmte Nieder Lausitzer," *Neues Lausitzisches Lagazin*, N.F. VII (1842), 187-200.

Prantl, Carl. *Geschichte der Logik im Abendland*. Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1870.

Reichling, Dietrich. *Ortwin Gratius, sein Leben und Wirken*. Heiligenstadt: Dilion, 1884.

Ritter, Gerhard. "Aus dem Kreise der Hof poeten Pfalzgraf FriedrichI," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, N.F. XXXVIII (1922), 109-123.

Ritter, Gerhard. "Die geschichliche Bedeutung des deutschen Humanismus," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXVII (1923), 393-453.

Ritter, Gerhard. "Die geschichtliche Bedeutung des deutschen Humanismus," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXVII (1923), 393-453.

Ritter, Gerhard. "Petrus Antonius Finariensis, der Nachfolger Peter Luders in Heidelberg," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, XXVI (1936), 89- 104.

Ritter, Gerhard. "Romantische und revolutionäre Elemente in der deutschen Theologie am Vorabend der Reformation," *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturewissenschaft*, XV (1927), 342-380.

Ritter, Gerhard. *Studien zur Spätscholastik*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1922.

Roth, Friedrich. *Willibald Pirckheimer, ein Lebensbild*. Halle: Niemeyer, 1887.

Rüegg, August. *Die beiden Blütezeiten des Basler Humanismus*. Basel: Schwabe, 1960.

Rupprich, Hans. *Die Frühzeit des Humanismus und der Renaissance in Deutschland*. Leipzig: Phillip Reclam, 1938.

Rupprich, Hans. "Willibald Pirckheimer, Beiträge zu einer Lebenserfassung," *Schweizer Beiträge zur allgemeinen Geschichte*, XV (1957), 64-110.

Schlecht, Joseph. "Zu Wimphelings Fehden mit Jakob Locher und Paul Lang," *Festgabe Karl Theodor von Heigel*, Munich: Carl Haushalter, 1903, 236-265.

Schmidt, Charles. *Histoire littéraire de l'Alsace*, 2 vols. Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1879.

Seidlmayer, Michael. "Konrad Celtis," *Jahrbuch für Fränkische Landesforschung*, XIX (1959), 395-416.

Spitz, Lewis W. *Conrad Celtis, the German Archhumanist.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957.

Spitz, Lewis W. "The Philosophy of Conrad Celtis," *Studies in the Renaissance*, I (1954), 22-38.

Spitz, Lewis W. *Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.

Spitz, Lewis W. "The *Theologica Platonica* in the Religious Thought of the German Humanists," *Middle Ages-Reformation Volkdkunde-Festschrift for John G. Kuntsmann*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959, 118-133.

Steiff, Karl. *Der erste Buchdruck in Tübingen*. Nieuwkopp: De Graff, 1963. (reprint of 1881 edition).

Vasoli, Cesare. "Dialettica e Rhetorica in Rodolpho Agricola," *Accademia toscana di scienze e lettere la Colombaria Attie Memorie*, XXII (1957), 305-355.

Velden, Henricus van der. *Rodolphus Agricola ein Nederlansch humanist der vijtiende eeuw*. Leiden: Sijthoff, 1911.

Wattenbach, Wilhelm. "Nachträgliches über Peter Luder," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, XXVII (1875), 95-99.

Wattenbach, Wilhelm. "Peter Luder," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, XXII (1869), 33-128.

Wattenbach, Wilhelm. "Peter Luder's Lobrede auf Pfalzgraf Friedrich den Siegreichen," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*. XXIII (1871), 21-38.

Wattenbach, Wilhelm. "Samuel Karoch von Lichtenberg, ein Heidelberger Humanist," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, XXVIII (1876), 38-51.

Wattenbach, Wilhelm. "Sigismund Gossembrot als Vorkämpfer der Humanisten und seine Gegner," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, XXV (1873), 36-68.

Weiss, Roberto. *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1941.

Woodward, Wm. H. *Studies in Education during the Age of the Renaissance*. Cambridge: University Press, 1906.

Zeydel, Edwin. *Sebastian Brant*. New York: Twayne, 1967.

SECONDARY WORKS ON UNIVERSITIES

(works followed by asterisk contain extensive source material)

Abe, Horst Rudolph. "Die frequentielle Bedeutung der Erfurt Universität im Rahmen des mittelalterlichen deutschen Hochschulewesens," Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Erfurt, II (1957), 29-57.

Aschbach, Joseph Ritter von. Geschichte der Wiener Universität, 2 vols. Vienna: Universitätsbuchhändlung, 1865, 1877. *

Bauch, Gustav. Die Anfänge der Universität Frankfurt a.O. Berlin: J. Harrwitz, 1900. *

Bauch, Gustav. Die Anfänge des Humanismus in Ingolstadt. Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1901. *

Bauch, Gustav. "Aus der Geschichte des Mainzer Humanismus," Archiv für Hessische Geschichte und Altertumskunde, N.F., V (1907), 3-86.

Bauch, Gustav. Geschichte des Leipziger Frühhumanismus. Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1899.

Bauch, Gustav. Die Reception des Humanismus in Wien. Breslau: M.&H. Marcus, 1903. *

Bauch, Gustav. Die Universität Erfurt im Zeitalter des Frühhumanismus. Breslau: M.&H. Marcus, 1904.

Bauch, Gustav. "Wittenberg und die Scholastik," Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde, XVIII (1897), 285-339.

Bauer, Johannes Joseph. Zur Frühgeschichte der theologischen Fakultät der Universität Freiburg-im-Breisgau. Freiburg-im-Breisgau: Eberhard Albert, 1957.

Benary, Friedrich. Zur Geschichte der Stadt und der Universität Erfurt am Ausgang des Mittelalter. Gotha: Perthes, 1919.

Bianco, Franz Joseph von. Die Alte Universität Köln. Cologne: Heberle, 1856. *

Bonjour, Edgar. *Die Universität Basel*. Basel: Helbing and Lichtenhahn, 1960.

Bruchmüller, W. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Leipzig und Wittenberg*. Leipzig: Dieter, 1898.

Denifle, Heinrich. *Die enstehung der Universitäten des Mittelalters bis 1400*. Berlin: Weidmann, 1885.

Ennen, L. *Geschichte der Stadt Köln*, IV. Cologne: Schwannschen Buchhandlung, 1875. *

Friedenberg, Emil. *Die Universität Leipzig in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*. Leipzig: Veit & Co., 1898. *

Friedensburg, Walter. *Geschichte der Universität Wittenberg*. Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1917.

Fletcher, J.M. "Wealth and Poverty in the Medieval German Universities," *Europe in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. J.R. Hale. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965, 410-436.

Geiger, Ludwig. "Der Humanismus an der Universität Heidelberg," *Die Nation*, III, no. 46 (August 14, 1886), 677-680.

Goldmann, Arthur, *Die Wiener Universität, 1519-1740*. Vienna: Gilhofer & Ranschburg, 1917.

Graven, Hubert, ed. *Festschrift zur Erinnerung an die Grundung der alten Universität Köln*. Cologne: Schroder, 1938.

Grossman, Maria S. "Humanism at Wittenberg 1486-1517," Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of History, Radcliffe College, 1959.

Haller, Johannes. *Die Anfänge der Universität Tübingen*, 2 vols. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1927, 1929. *

Hartfelder, Karl. "Heidelberg und der Humanismus," *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Geschichte*, II (1885), 177-195, 671-696.

Hartfelder, Karl. "Zur Gelehrtengeschichte Heidelbergs am Ende des Mittelalters," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, N.F. VI (1891), 141-171.

Haussleiter, Johannes. "Die Universität Wittenberg vor dem Eintritt Luthers," *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*. XIV (1903), 81-103, 190-213.

Hautz, John Friedrich. *Geschichte der Universität Heidelberg*, I. Mannheim: J. Schneider, 1862.

Heinzelmann, W. "Die Universität Erfurt und der Humanismus," *Erfurter Lutherfest-Almanach*, ed., Ottomar Loreng. Erfurt: Otto,(1883), 1-43.

Helbig, Herbert. *Die Reformation der Universität Leipzig im 16. Jahrhundert*. Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1953.

Helssig, Rudolph. "Die wissenschaftlichen Vorbedingungen für Baccalaureat in Artibus und Magisterium," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Universität Leipzig*, Leipzig: Harassowitz, 1907. II, 1-93. *

Hermann, Fritz. "Die Mainzer Bursen 'zum Algesheimer' und 'zum Schenkenberg' und ihre Statuten," *Beiträge für Hessische Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, N.F. V (1907), 94-124.

Hermelink, Heinrich. *Die theologische Fakultät Tübingen vor der Reformation*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1906.

Horawitz, Adalbert. "Der Humanismus in Wein," *Historisches Taschenbuch*, VI (1883), 137-200.

Just, Leo. *Die Alte Universität Mainz von 1477 bis 1798*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1957.

Kampschulte, F.W. *Die Universität Erfurt in ihrem Verhältnisse zu dem Humanismus und der Reformation*, 2 vols. Trier: G. Lintz, 1858-1860.

Kauffman, Georg. "Die deutschen Universitäten; ihre Entwicklung vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert," *Historische Vierteljahrschrift*, XX (1920), 177-186.

Kaufmann, Georg. *Geschichte der deutschen Universitäten*, 2 vols. Stuttgart: Gotta, 1888, 1896. *

Keussen, Hermann. *Die alte Universität Köln*. Cologne: Creutzer, 1934.

Kink, Rudolph. *Geschichte der kaiserlichen Universität zu Wien*, 2 vols. Vienna: Carl Gerold, 1854. *

Kisch, Guido. *Die Anfänge der Juristischen Fakultät der Universität Basel, 1459-1529*. Basel: Helbing and Lichtenhann, 1962.

Kleineidam, Erich. *Universitas Studii Erffordensis, I, 1392-1460*. Leipzig: St. Benno Verlag, 1964.

Kosegarten, Johann G. *Geschichte der Universität Greifswald mit urkundlichen Beilagen*. Greifswald: C.A. Koch, 1857. *

Lhotsky, Alphons. *Die Wiener Artistenfakultät, 1365-1497*. Vienna: Hermann Böhlhaus, 1965. *

Mederer, Johannes. *Annales Ingolstadiensis Academiae*, Part I. Ingolstadt: Wilhelm Krull, 1782.

Mitterdorfer, Sebastian. *Conspectus Historiae Universitatis Viennensis*, II. Vienna: Schwendimann, 1724.

Muther, Theodor. *Aus dem Universitäts und Gelehrtenleben im Zeitalter der Reformation*. Erlangen: Andreas Deichert, 1866. *

Oergel, Georg. "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Erfurter Humanismus," *Mitteilungen des Vereins für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde von Erfurt*, XV (1892), 1-136.

Oergel, Georg. "Die Studienreform der Universität Erfurt vom Jahre 1519," *Jahrbücher der Königlichen Akadamie gemeinnützigen Wissenschaften zu Erfurt*, N.F., XXV (1899), 81-96.

Paetow, Lewis John. *The Arts Course at Medieval Universities with Special Reference to Grammar and Rhetoric*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1910.

Paulsen, Friedrich. *Geschichte des geleherten Unterrichts auf den deutsche Schulen und Universitäten*. Leipzig: Veit, 1885.

Paulsen, Friedrich. "Die Grundung der deutschen Universitäten im Mittelalter," *Historische Zeitschrift*, XLV (1881), 251-311.

Petry, Ludwig. "Die Reformation als Epoche der deutschen Universitätsgeschichte. Eine Zwischenbilanz," *Festgabe Joseph Lortz*, II. eds. Erwin Iserloh and Peter Manus. Baden-Baden: Bruno Grimm, (1958), 317-353.

Polet, A. "Les origines et les debuts de l'humanisme à l'Université Louvain," *Les études classique*, VI (1937), 28-39.

Rashdall, Hastings. *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895. New edition eds. F.M. Powicke and A.B. Emden. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.

Renaudet, Augustin. *Préréforme et humanisme à Paris*. Paris: Champion, 1953.

Ritter Gerhard. "Aus dem geistigen Leben der Heidelberger Universität im Ausgang des Mittelalters," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, N.F., XXXVII (1922), 1-33.

Ritter, Gerhard. *Die Heidelberger Universität*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1936. *

Schreiber, Heinrich. *Geschichte der Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zu Freiburg im Breisgau*, Freiburg: Franz Wangler, 1857. 2 vols. *

Schweibert, George E. "The University of Wittenberg and some other Universities in their Relation to the German Reformation." Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of History Cornell University, 1929.

Steinmetz, Max. "Die Universität Wittenberg und der Humanismus (1502-1521)," *450 Jahre Martin-Luther-Universität Halle Wittenberg*, Leipzig: Leipziger Grossbuchbinderei, (1956), 103-140.

Stern, Leo. "Die Geschichtliche Gesamtlage Deutschlands zur Zeit der Gründung der Universität Wittenberg." *450 Jahre Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg*, Leipzig: Leipziger Grossbuchbinderei,(1956),1-69.

Thorbecke, August. *Statuten und Reformationen der Universität Heidelberg vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert*. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1891. *

Thurot, Charles. *De l'organization de l'enseignement dans l'université de Paris au moyen-age*. Paris: Dezobry, 1850.

Vischer, Wilhelm, *Geschichte der Universität Basel von 1460 bis 1529*. Basel: H. Georg, 1860. *

ABSTRACT

The dissertation sets out to explore the problem of the relationship of humanism and scholasticism in Germany in the period from about 1450-1520. German historians in the nineteenth century tended to see humanists and scholastics as implacable enemies who experienced constant conflict until the humanists finally triumphed over their enemies sometime in the early sixteenth century. Recent revisionists, such as Gerhard Ritter, have de-emphasized the humanist-scholastic struggles and argued that the frequency and bitterness of the conflicts have been grossly exaggerated.

This dissertation examined the problem on two levels: first on the level of intellectual history, it examined the attitudes of the leading German humanists in regard to scholasticism and looked at the various intellectual feuds which supposedly involved a conflict between humanism and scholasticism; on the level of university history, it examined the impact of humanism on German university practices and measured the speed at which humanist ideas were received.

The research has shown that humanism and scholasticism were more compatible than most authorities have imagined. Every humanist was critical of some aspect of traditional scholasticism, but their criticisms were limited and moderate. Before

1500, for example, the humanists were interested mainly in reforming medieval grammar teaching and incorporating courses on rhetoric and poetry into university curriculums. Criticisms of scholastic methods in theology and philosophy became common only after 1500. The research has shown that many German humanists were influenced by the scholastic training they received in their native universities; as a result several had a strong interest in natural philosophy and many had words of praise for some of the older scholastics such as Acquinas and Albertus Magnus.

The first humanists began teaching at the German universities in the 1450's, and by the 1470's several German schools had established regular stipends for lecturers on rhetoric and poetry. But no major humanist breakthroughs in regard to curriculum reform took place until the years after the German Reformation.